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NECDOES
OF THE
ALTAMONT FAMILY.

A NOVEL.

LANE, MINERVA PRESS, LEADINHALL STREET.



ANECDOTES
OF THE
ALTAMONT FAMILY.

A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY
THE AUTHOR OF THE SICILIAN, &c.

“ How shall I ’scape the stings of my own conscience ?
“ Which will for ever rack me with remembrance,
“ Haunt me by day, and torture me by night.”

LEE.

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ANECDOTES
OF THE
ALTAMONT FAMILY.

CHAP. I.

THE Counsellor continued a daily visiter at Delmont House during the Colonel's and Henry's absence, and seemed even more anxious than the Earl and Lord St. Osyth to hear of their safe arrival at Rosenwald. He had already decided to relinquish his place at the bar, and to retire to Lenham; between which and Bath he meant to spend the chief

of his time ; his London acquaintance having greatly fallen off since he had been forced to acknowledge the legitimacy of his eldest son, whose title he found would be extinct :—this, however, he thought of small consequence, as the noble one of Altamont must finally center in his children ; the eldest of whom he now hoped to see Archbishop of Canterbury, and the second a General Officer before he died. These pleasing prospects fully occupied his mind, though he thought the time long since the departure of the travellers, and frequently hoped they had not fallen in with any banditti.

At last, to his infinite joy, he received a note from Lord Fitzarran, to inform him Colonel O'Hallaran and Mr. Melcombe were upon their return with the body, which they meant, if possible, to bring into the Thames ; but as that must depend upon the wind, they would dispatch an immediate express from wherever they landed, that every thing might be in readiness for the reception
of

of their friend's remains at Delmont House. The Earl concluded, by saying he should immediately set out for Richmond, that he might not interfere with the necessary preparations ; merely intending to return into Park Lane, to deliver up the house in form : he therefore requested none of his grandson's suite might be discharged, but left every order concerning the funeral to Lord Delmont's heir.

The Counsellor easily consoled himself for the shortness of this epistle and the *secheresse* of the style, by finding the contents so truly satisfactory, though he thought it necessary to appear prodigiously afflicted in public :—the fortune he was upon the point of inheriting would have amply consoled him for the loss of all his children, still appearances must be minutely attended to upon the present occasion ; he therefore hastened to Delmont House.

The Earl had just set out for Richmond, he was informed.—He said he could not wonder he had withdrawn himself from what must now become a real house of mourning, and wished he had been spared the melancholy task of giving orders respecting the funeral, but that his respect for Lord Fitzarran's grief must preclude him from asking his advice; assuring the servants that he should retain all those who wished to remain in his service, as the augmentation of his fortune would oblige him to increase his suite.

None of the household in Park Lane felt at all flattered by these kind offers, neither liking nor respecting the Counsellor; nor were they deceived by his well-dissembled sorrow: they therefore unanimously resolved, if Lord Fitzarran chose to dispense with their services, to seek some other master more to their minds than Mr. Egerton. That gentleman next proceeded to Whitehall.

Lord

Lord St. Osyth was too much immersed in affairs of State to receive him. The Guards were just gone to the relief of Holland; couriers were, therefore, hourly arriving from, and being dispatched to the Royal Commander.

The Counsellor must, therefore, take upon himself the acting part on the present melancholy occasion; every thing he did would meet Lord St. Osyth's approbation, who would devote every moment he could spare from the duties of his station, to the consolation of the good old Earl. As the express which would announce the landing of the body, would undoubtedly be sent into Park Lane, he would be apprized when absolutely to expect it. According to the Colonel's last letter, his Lordship rather supposed he would be in England in the course of a week; he should only request to know how the Counsellor meant to manage the business, which he must trouble him to communicate in writing, as he thought his intentions ought to be

submitted to Lord Fitzarran for his perusal. Such was the substance of the message delivered to Mr. Egerton by one of his Lordship's secretaries, who immediately took his leave; and, hastening home, sent for the first undertaker in London, to whom he committed the care of the funeral.

Lord Altamont having found his loyalty overlooked, notwithstanding he always voted with the Ministry, and continually appeared in the Drawing Room, had not as usual come up to London for the Birth-day; but foreseeing his late grandson's body would indubitably be brought down to Castle Innham, he left Scotland rather sooner than he intended, that no part of the consequent expence might fall to his share, and arrived in London on the evening of the day on which the Counsellor had issued his orders respecting his son's interment.

Lord Altamont thought he had been rather extravagant; still as it was the last duty a parent

parent could perform, and as Mr. Egerton was to be so great a gainer, and, moreover, it was so much to his interest to remain friends with the Lords Fitzarran and St. Osyth, he agreed a little money ought not to be regretted, and it was certainly prudent to study their taste.

Mr. Egerton, therefore, in consequence of the former Nobleman's hint, wrote the following letter, which he sent in the course of the next day to Whitehall.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD
ST. OSYTH.

" MY LORD,

" In strict conformity to your wishes, which I consider as orders on the present occasion, I here transmit you a brief account

of my intended arrangements respecting the last duty I am about to perform for my much-regretted son. I intend the corpse should lie in state from the moment it arrives at Delmont House (where every proper measure will be taken to give it a solemn reception) till midnight the same evening, when I mean it to be conveyed, with all due pomp, ceremony, and military honours, to the parish church, from whence it shall proceed, properly attended and escorted, to Castle Innham, to be deposited in the vault of my ancestors. Probably your Lordship will do your late son-in-law the honour to attend as chief mourner. I shall be too real a one to undertake the office, nor can I request my father would supply my place; therefore, should the same motive prevent you from acceding to my proposal, I shall depute my eldest son to represent us all.

“ Lord Fitzarran may rest assured that every mark of respect, affection, or real sorrow

row a truly afflicted parent can devise, shall be paid to the memory of my beloved Delmont. A coffin, suitable to his rank, will be prepared to receive his much-lamented remains, and a hearse shall be in readiness to set off at a moment's warning.

“ I subjoin a list of those friends of my son's, whom I mean to invite to pay him the last sad honours. Eight of his brother officers I wish to bear the pall. Hatbands, scarfs, gloves, and rings, I mean to present to every one who attends; and only request the Earl, or you, my Lord, will send me a list of any other gentlemen to whom you may like to pay a similar compliment, or inform me if you wish to alter my plan of proceeding. I trust you will believe I shall be happy to comply with the desires of both, or either; and that nothing short of what I considered as your joint commands would have induced me to

take upon myself any act of authority till after the funeral.—I therefore remain,

“ My Lord,

“ Your Lordship’s most obedient

“ C. EGERTON.”

P. S. My serious fear of increasing the Earl of Fitzarran’s sorrow alone prevents me from visiting Richmond. You will, therefore, do me the honour to make my respects acceptable to that worthy Peer.

Having dispatched this precious morsel, fraught, as he believed, with expressions of grief, which must convince these two Noblemen he was a sincere mourner, the Counsellor sent for his sons. The eldest was as sincerely afflicted as his father wished him to appear to be ; the youngest, who knew the officers of his regiment still regretted his brother’s secession

secession from their corps, was easily consoled when he learned his father's intention of removing him into the Guards.

Mrs. Egerton saw her daughter a Peeress in imagination, and thought every moment an age till she could, without violating the laws of decency, repair to Lenham.

Every thing was now in readiness for the reception of the corpse:—the black hangings were all prepared, and merely required to be put up.—The Earl of Fitzarran and Lord St. Osyth had made no alteration in Mr. Egerton's well-arranged plans; and the latter had promised to be in Park Lane in the evening, but had declined accepting the post of chief mourner, which was in consequence delegated to Charles Egerton, jun.—Every moment now appeared an hour to the impatient Counsellor; when, just as he was rising from table, on the eighth day after he had received the first news of the travellers being upon their return, Martin, almost

covered with dirt, from the speed he had made, was shewn into the room. Charles Egerton burst into tears ; his sister followed his example ; the Counsellor covered his face with his handkerchief, while the valet told them the Colonel and Mr. Melcombe were now on the road to London, and had sent him forward to inform Lord Fitzarran they expected to be in Park Lane by eight o'clock at latest.

“ Good God ! ” exclaimed the Counsellor, ringing the bell most furiously, and dispatching all his servants and clerks different ways, to give notice to the undertaker, to assemble the company, and to carry his final orders into Park Lane, where he told Martin he should instantly proceed, meaning to dress there.

“ I am going to Whitehall, Sir,” said the valet, “ and from thence to Richmond ; but understanding at home that you had the management of every thing, I hastened here first.”

“ You

" You did perfectly right ; don't let me detain you another moment :—but stop, is the hearse required ?—I know one is in readiness."

" No, Sir ; not being apprized of your intentions, nor having time allowed them to inform you of their's, the Colonel and Mr. Melcombe have taken every proper precaution ; we came up the river as far as Gravesend."

" Hasten to Richmond, I request, young man.—Is my carriage ready ?" cried the impatient Counsellor. " I must go to Delmont House."

Martin bowed, and retired ; Mr. Egerton being in too great a bustle even to remind him to return for the interment. In a very short time he and his sons reached Park Lane, where all was truly bustle and confusion :—undertaker's men, stripped in their shirts, were hanging every room below stairs with sables ; in the largest of which the body was
to

to lie in state. A crimson velvet coffin, ornamented with the Delmont arms, emblazoned on a plate of silver, in addition to the name, age, and date of the late Lord's death, (or at least of his having been found in the Forest of Rosenwald) with a Latin motto appropriate to the occasion, was ready for the reception of his remains. The coronet was already placed upon a suitable cushion, and the regimental sword, unsheathed, was prepared to grace the coffin lid; an infinity of wax lights were ready, which were to be lit up the instant the hearse drove into the court.

Mr. Egerton and his sons were soon dressed in new suits of the deepest mourning, decorated with weepers; and every servant of their's and the late Lord's were also in black. Lord Altamont soon made his appearance, and might be reckoned among the real mourners upon the present occasion. The other guests, who were chiefly brother officers and friends of the deceased, among whom

whom was Mr. Melcombe, senior, were all more or less affected for the loss of their young friend. Every hat was adorned with a costly band the moment they arrived; in addition to which, every gentleman received a scarf, a ring, and a pair of gloves, and various refreshments were handed round; but a variety of the richest wines were insufficient to raise the spirits of the company; and the night, which was dark, tempestuous, and rainy, seemed perfectly in unison with their feelings. With difficulty a sort of desultory conversation was supported by some of the party. The Counsellor appeared, and certainly was at times very much agitated; as many carriages had passed since the arrival of the company, and it grew late, he could not help expressing his fears that some accident had befallen the travellers, and wondered Lord St. Osyth had not made his appearance: when, suddenly and unannounced, to the infinite surprise of every one present, Lord Fitzarran, whom the whole party supposed at Richmond,

mond, in the full regimental of a General Officer, entered the drawing-room. The company looked at each other, as if expecting a solution of this extraordinary visit, and all silently grieved, presuming his appearance was in consequence of a sudden mental derangement, as he wore no crape round his arm, nor any other external sign of mourning for a grandson they all knew he perfectly idolized. After bowing to every one round, who in silence returned the compliment, he began to pace the room, listening at intervals for the sound of the hearse, as the company presumed. Lord Altamont and the Counsellor were the most astonished of the party; the former gentleman changed colour, looked stedfastly at what he was almost tempted to believe a delusive phantom only visible to himself, stammering out—"What can this mean?—I will try to prevail upon his Lordship to retire; his attendants have been greatly to blame."

At

At that moment a carriage was heard advancing full speed, and in another second it stopped in the court: a general silence prevailed above and below. Lord Fitzarran flung open the room door; at the moment three loud and long cheers made the whole house re-echo with the sound; and before any one could enquire what had occasioned a noise so peculiarly indecent at such a moment, Lord St. Osyth, Colonel O'Hallaran, and Henry Melcombe entered the room, followed, not by the body the two latter had gone to fetch, but by *Lord Delmont, in propria persona*, habited in the superb dress of a Russian Bayard, and looking better than any of the company had ever seen him before.

Amazement for a minute or more appeared to have deprived every one present of their faculties; but no painter, except the inimitable Hogarth, could have done justice to the Counsellor's countenance, when he caught sight of the man whose fortune and estates he already considered as his own:—had Lord Delmont's

Delmont's eyes possessed the fascinating power attributed to those of the rattlesnake, he could not have gazed at him more steadfastly, nor with greater marks of horror and dismay. The peculiarity of his dress appeared to increase his dread, till, unable to support himself, he was obliged to catch hold of his no less astonished, though by no means terrified father; while the enraptured Lord Fitzarran, taking his grandson in his arms, exclaimed, "Welcome once more to England, my darling boy!—and to this house that I informed the Counsellor I should only revisit, to deliver up in form, which I now do most joyfully to its real owner. To this honourable company I feel many apologies are due; but when they learn why I suffered them till this moment to mourn, as dead, a friend they have all convinced me they sincerely esteemed, I trust my reasons will appear a sufficient excuse for my conduct."

Throwing off their scarfs and rings, as of one accord, the whole company began to
welcome

welcome the master of the house ; while Lord Altamont (convinced no sensation resembling excess of joy, such as the unexpected and almost miraculous return of his son might have been supposed to occasion, had overcome Mr. Egerton, who appeared, on the contrary, sinking with terror, and as if wishing for instant annihilation) suspected some part of the truth, therefore indignantly threw him from him, while he advanced to embrace a grandson he had sincerely regretted, dreading, though impatient, to learn the occasion of his late absence, and for what sinister purpose he had been reported to have been murdered in Germany.—And, as our readers may participate in his latter feelings, we will, with their leave, return to the Castle of Rosenwald.

CHAP. II.

COLONEL O'HALLARAN and Henry Melcombe advanced into the saloon, from whence the voices proceeded, determined to know whether they really were prisoners, or whether, as the latter had suspected, any thing had transpired respecting the murder of their regretted friend. Seven or eight gentlemen, most of them wrapped in large German pelisses, were standing, with their backs towards them, round a large wood fire. Upon hearing their footsteps, the old physician, who had been their companion the preceding day, turned his head.

Henry,

Henry, in German, requested to know why they were detained?

“Sure, in God!” cried one of the company, turning hastily towards him, “I know that voice!—It is, it is Harry Melcombe!” catching hold of Melcombe’s passive hand while speaking.

So very unexpected a salute from a person he had been weeping over as dead only the day before, for it was neither “angel, spirit, nor goblin damned,” but the hero of our tale in perfect health and apparent excellent spirits, might have alarmed a more courageous man than the one he was addressing; who trembled so excessively, Lord Delmont was obliged to support him for a minute or more. A fur cap, which came very low upon his Lordship’s forehead, added to his pelisse, prevented Colonel O’Hallaran from instantly recognizing his person; but a few seconds sufficed to convince him it really was the elegant youth

youth Lord Fitzarran had so joyfully acknowledged for his grandson, risen, as it should seem, from the dead;—therefore seizing the hand he still had at liberty, he endeavoured to express the real joy he felt, while the not much less surprised Delmont hastily enquired, “How long have you been at Rosenwald?—When did you leave England?—How is my grandfather?”

“We arrived at Rosenwald yesterday,” replied the Colonel, “and left England seventeen days ago; the good Earl was as well as could be expected, considering, like ourselves, he thought you had fallen a sacrifice to some German banditti.—But pray are we all prisoners?”

“What, have you been also confined? What end was that to answer? I should like to know,” rejoined his Lordship; “though she is capable of putting any scheme in practice likely to keep my friends in ignorance of my existence.”

“Who do you mean?” asked the Colonel?

“The

“ The owner of this mansion.—But we will retire to a more private apartment, as I have a thousand questions to ask you both, and am convinced you are not less curious ; but first let me introduce you to a gentleman who has done me the honour to take me under his protection,” turning to a venerable Austrian, whom he named the Prince of Ermanstadt ; who, with a benevolent smile, observed he had learned, with surprise, from the physician, what had brought the two gentlemen to Rosenwald, where he requested they would not consider themselves as prisoners, though he was fearful he must necessarily detain his Lordship till the Princess could be removed to Vienna ; he must, therefore do all in his power to render the Castle a rather more agreeable abode to Lord Delmont than it had hitherto been ; requesting he would consider himself as much at home as in his own house.

His Lordship bowed ; and forgetting, in
his

his anxiety to question his friends, he was yet fasting, he returned with them to the apartment where they had spent the night, the Colonel undertaking to lead the way out. The valet's visible terror, when Lord Delmont entered the room, was truly laughable, nor could Martin be immediately persuaded he was his much-loved and sincerely regretted master ; though, when convinced it was his Lord, his joy knew no bounds ; he laughed and wept in a breath ; then wished he had wings, that he might the sooner convey the joyful tidings to Lord Fitzarran, whom he fervently wished had accompanied them to Germany.

Montague was affected by the attachment he displayed, and secretly resolved to reward him when they returned.

He was still expressing his transports, when several of the Princess's servants appeared with tea, coffee, &c. They were soon dismissed
as

as well as the overjoyed Martin and his companion.

The Colonel being all impatience to have the late mysteries elucidated, requested Lord Delmont would let them know what had befallen them from the moment he had parted from his father and Melcombe at the Bank, as they had never been able to discover who the lady was he had then joined.

“I was unacquainted with her rank myself,” he replied, “but I can now inform you she was the Princess of Rosenwald and Lindenfelt: the first title she inherits from her father, the second she derives from her late husband.”

“Well, but how came you to leave us so strangely, my dear friend,” asked Henry, “if you were unacquainted with this Princess?”

“With her rank I told you. I had long been rather intimately so with her person. But allow me one question before I proceed—

did you come into Germany, expecting to find me in this (to you and all my friends I should have supposed) impenetrable castle?"

"We more than expected to find your Lordship," replied the Colonel. "We came at a certainty, as we thought of finding your remains in the chapel of this ancient mansion. The fellow, who was led out of the saloon a few minutes before we entered, came to England purposely to announce your death to your relations." He then related every thing that had passed from the first moment after his Lordship was discovered to be absolutely missing, down to the present time; and thus concluded—"Therefore, we certainly should have conveyed the body of some poor soul to England, you perceive, if we had not so fortunately discovered you were still in the land of the living. But what astonishes me more than any thing, this murdered man, whoever he was, was dressed in the very cloaths you had on when you so suddenly disappeared."

"And

“ And very possibly may have been purposely murdered,” replied Lord Delmont, “ to further the iniquitous schemes of the Princess, and Counsellor Egerton.—But to make this more clear, I must, as you wish, take up my story from the moment I parted with you, Henry, and returned into the Bank with the elegant lady Mr. Egerton chose to admire, with whom I was personally acquainted, but whose name I really did not know.—We had scarcely reached the great hall, before some of her clerks, agents, or attendants brought her a large sum of money they had been to receive. She then told me, as we had met so *apropos*, I must attend her to a boat she had in waiting at Irongate Stairs. She observed I could not very well put a negative upon her request, as it would not detain me more than half an hour; therefore, as she had a hackney coach in waiting, we soon reached the place of our destination. During our short ride she informed me she was going a little way down the river to see a friend, who was on board a Russian vessel then moored

in the Thames; she did not mean to stop more than ten minutes, and therefore wished I would favour her with my company during her short marine trip, as she was particularly fearful upon the water, and was literally quite alone; nor should she have thought of venturing in a boat, if it was not absolutely necessary she should see her friend before she sailed, upon business of very great importance; assuring me the vessel did not lay above a mile from where she intended to take water—she had been on board several times, and had never been more than ten minutes in reaching it. In short, I suffered myself to be persuaded to attend her, as I at that time considered myself under some sort of obligation to be polite to her; besides I had long been curious to know who she really was.

“Four very well-dressed sailors were waiting with a smart boat at the stairs she mentioned; and the moment we were seated, began to pull away with all their might. I soon perceived the lady’s mile was at least
three,

three, though we were not long in reaching the ship, the tide being in our favour ; and having ascended its side, we were conducted into the state cabin, which struck me even at the moment as being most magnificently fitted up.

“ A lady, who appeared to have been in expectation of my companion, received us very politely ; and having each taken a seat, they entered into earnest discourse, in a language I did not understand :—various refreshments were soon produced, and as I was impatient to return, I made very little ceremony, but began to make free with what was placed before us, not to prolong the time ; till having been on board nearly three quarters of an hour, I reminded my companion of her promise, alledging that I had a particular engagement, which obliged me to return to town as speedily as possible. They both laughed at my earnestness, telling me I was their prisoner, and must bear my captivity with
c 3 patience,

patience, beginning again to discourse in Russian. Having approached one of the cabin windows during their conversation, I perceived the vessel was under weigh. Convinced now that I had been inveigled on board, in consequence of some scheme I could not immediately fathom, without communicating my private thoughts to this female Machiavel, I carelessly said I would go upon deck till her conference was over; but found I was in reality a prisoner, for the cabin door was fastened on the outside, and two men were placed as sentinels. I was now certain we had already proceeded some way down the Thames, as I had before perceived four boats had us in tow, notwithstanding the tide was in our favour.

“ I was at a loss how to extricate myself from what I began to consider as a very irksome situation; at first, therefore, I endeavoured to take their manœuvres for a joke, and they agreed with what they supposed was my real way of thinking, the lady whom we had

had found in the vessel, gaily hinting that she meant to take us to Russia ; though, if I was averse to visiting so cold a country, she would send me on shore as soon as we had dined, till which time she could not think of parting with us. I soon, however, lost all patience, and with one blow forced the cabin door, meaning to run upon deck to call for assistance ; but I was instantly secured by the two men I have already mentioned, one of whom brought you the news of my intended death, and was, by my desire (as having been the Princess's principal agent), secured the moment I returned here ; the other is absent upon some similar expedition I presume.—To contend would, I found, be fruitless, as they even took the precaution of handcuffing me, and then left me alone with their mistress, who had herself deluded me on board.

“ She now threw off the mask ; perhaps I ought to have told you she had, not many days previous to our meeting at the Bank, made me an offer of her heart and hand,

which various reasons, besides my very recent loss, had prompted me to decline. She now, therefore, declared herself actuated by love in all she had done, vowed she could not exist out of my presence, and declared I should accompany her into Germany.

“ I used every argument likely to induce her to relinquish so mad a scheme, without effect : and at last, to her great triumph, we cleared the London Channel.—She then told me who she really was, having first had me released from my manacles ; which, to prevent their galling my wrists, as she thought I should not very patiently submit to such a restraint, were absolutely covered with fur.—She then proceeded to tell me she had long been in habits of intimacy with Counsellor Egerton before she had ever seen me, which she first did at Devizes, having been upon a visit at Woodley Abbey at the very time I rejected Mrs. Vanderhorst's kind offers to make my fortune ; which had prejudiced her so much in my favour, that she had resolved

to offer me her hand as a reward for my spirited conduct. My precipitate marriage had therefore overturned all her schemes in my favour, and nearly drove her distracted.

“ I must acknowledge that we had a meeting not long after I had given my hand to the late Lady Delmont, the particulars of which you will allow me to pass over in silence :—suffice it to say, she declared it renewed her former hopes, and made her resolve, in spite of myself, to make me one of the first men in Europe, if I ever regained my liberty ; therefore my late barbarous refusal of her noble offers had induced her to entice me on board this vessel, which was her own, and every soul in it under her absolute command : again making me an offer of her hand and heart, endeavouring to bribe me into compliance, by promises I hardly think Lord Altamont would have withstood.

“ I told her if she would permit me to return to London, I would take her generous proposals into serious consideration ; but as to being threatened or bribed into a compliance with her wishes, she would find I was proof against both : nor would it be very flattering either to her feelings or her self-love, were I to accept of her hand under my present circumstances, as she must attribute my compliance to the basest of all passions, namely, fear ! and I was convinced she despised a coward as cordially as I did myself.

“ She asked if I would promise, upon my honour, to give her my hand at the expiration of my mourning, provided she set me at liberty ?

“ That would be only giving her a still greater proof of my pusillanimity, I observed, declaring fear should never influence my actions. She already knew I was neither avaricious nor ambitious ; and had she carried me off in the same manner when I was only

Lieutenant O'Brien, and the supposed natural son of Mr. Egerton, I should equally have spurned at being forced even into measures very likely to increase my future happiness.

“Then weigh well a secret I am going to impart to you,” said she: “you are not Counsellor Egerton’s son!”

“Not Counsellor Egerton’s son!” exclaimed the Colonel and Henry in a breath, “’tis impossible; it must be false; your resemblance to him, and more particularly to your uncle, must confute this shallow device. But pray who does he allow you to be?”

“That he does not chuse to acknowledge,” replied Lord Delmont. “I was scarcely less astonished than you are, but calmly requested she would seriously inform me upon what grounds she hazarded so very improbable an assertion. She instantly produced a letter addressed to herself from the

Counsellor, containing, as near as I can recollect, the following paragraph.

“ Should the young man continue as blind as he has heretofore been to his own interest, tell him (which I pledge my honour and reputation to prove entirely to your satisfaction) that he is not my son ; nor shall he know who he really is, nor whether he has any reason to boast of, or blush for his origin, till he has assumed the title of your husband.— Should he find means to elude your vigilance, and thus disconcert your wishes, assure him that I will deprive him of his present rank, and by undeceiving Lord Fitzarran, prevent him from bestowing his fortune upon an alien to his blood:—but I trust you will not even be obliged to shew him this letter, to induce him to accept with rapture the happiness in store for him.”

“ If

"If I can but get hold of that letter, I think I will oblige the writer to tell me who I really am, though I have not disposed of my liberty in favour of his confidante."

"Why were you for a moment the dupe of so improbable a fiction?" interrupted the Colonel. Would such a man, could he have avoided it, have ever acknowledged your legitimacy?—He entangled himself in his own snares when he brought you forward as his natural son:—but how he will clear himself from this fresh act of duplicity I cannot foresee. It had not, at all events, since you are still single, the desired effect."

"I treated it as lightly as you do, to the Princess; though I went so far as to say if my supposed father would make good his assertion, by absolutely declaring who were my parents, I might be tempted, out of gratitude, if she procured me the wished-for information, to listen with rather more patience to
her

her proposals. She would endeavour to oblige me, she replied.

“ However, after a tedious voyage of near sixteen days, during which time, when not *tête-à-tête* with the Princess, I was under the care of the fellow you have seen, and another equally as stout, who were my constant attendants, I was landed in the night from a covered barge, in which we came up the Rhine, within a mile of this castle, whither I was immediately conveyed, and put in possession of a most sumptuous suite of apartments, being a part of those particularly appropriated to the Princess’s own use; where my fair enslaver assured me I should end my days, if I persisted in refusing to become the first man in the Empire.

“ I should only tire your patience were I to attempt to enumerate the various arguments she made use of to subdue what she called my invincible obstinacy, during the first two months of my confinement. She repeatedly pledged her honour to make Coun-
fellow

fellor Egerton prove what he had advanced, if I would but demand an explanation as Prince of Rosenwald, which title it was in her power to bestow upon the man of her choice:—then again she would make me offers of vesting all power over her immense fortune in myself; next I was assailed by flattery and every blandishment a fine woman can hold forth to enslave our sex; and finally threatened with a much more rigorous confinement.

“ I in return declared that the preliminary step must be her forcing Mr. Egerton to acknowledge why he had hitherto so grossly imposed upon me; as till I was satisfied in that respect, I would not accept her offers, even had she an Imperial Crown to bestow.

“ She however one day swore, by the love she bore me, I should be satisfied.

“ I therefore rather presume her confidential servant carried over dispatches to Mr. Egerton when he came to announce my death, as she had ceased to persecute me upon the subject of matrimony for some days before I
made

made my escape. My confinement was certainly rendered as agreeable as possible :—my saloon, eating, bed, and dressing rooms were fitted up in a style of magnificence I never saw equalled. I was besides permitted to walk whenever I chose, in a superb gallery, which commanded a most delightful prospect: but every window I was allowed to approach, was fortified on the outside with bars of iron let into the stone work, between which I could not have thrust my arm; therefore though, when open, they afforded me plenty of air, I had no hopes of escaping from my prison by their means.

“ The two men who had had me in charge from the moment of my embarkation, continued for some time to attend upon me; the one who returned with you, always officiating as my valet.

“ An ample wardrobe had been provided against my arrival, chiefly consisting of Russian dresses, which the Princess thought particularly adapted to my figure.

“ The

“ The riding-frock, &c. I had on when we parted, I never saw from the moment I first undressed on board the Princess's vessel : she also chose to retain my pocket-book, purse, and watch, not chusing I should have it in my power to bribe the men she had placed about me, or any resources, should I find means to escape.

“ But from what you have told me, I should suppose she even then had it in contemplation to make every one, at all interested in my fate, suppose me no more.

“ I therefore begin to think, even had I accepted her offers, I should have remained a prisoner for life. But about six weeks ago one of my attendants ceased to make his appearance as usual ; and in less than another week, my valet left me to wait upon myself.

“ The Princess always dined and supped with me : and though I no longer saw any servants, every thing was laid ready for me, and my apartments were kept in their accustomed order, I suppose, by some of her confidential women.

“ he

“ She apologized to me for having deprived me of my valet, whom she had been obliged to send into Russia ; but assured me he should resume his functions the moment he returned, though she hoped ere that, she should be able to satisfy me respecting my birth, in which case she expected to be able immediately to introduce me to her numerous friends, as her chosen Lord and master.

“ I therefore suspected he was gone to England instead of Russia, and became consequently doubly anxious to make my escape before he returned, trusting I should be able to force Mr. Egerton either to affirm or contradict what he had written to the Princess.

“ Hitherto I had conceived it almost impossible to elude the vigilance of my jailers ; but two of them were now removed, and a sudden thought struck me, which induced me to make the attempt, and proved not only productive of my liberty, but will, I am of opinion, be the occasion of Madame de Roscnwald's being confined for life in the very apartments she made my prison.

“ In

“In the middle of the dining-room, where she and I daily ate our meals, are four, to appearance, fluted gold pillars, between which stood the table, which, upon previous notice having been given us by means of a bell, that communicated with the saloon, we always found, upon entering the room, completely covered. When the courses were to be changed, either the Princess or I rung a bell pendant from one of the pillars, when, as if by magic, the table we had been sitting before, gradually ascended, the ceiling opening when it had nearly reached the top of the pillars, to receive it; and one from below almost instantaneously supplied its place: indeed the chafins both above and below were so immediately closed, it was impossible to discern who, or whether any person put this curious piece of machinery into motion.

“I had several times enquired into the nature of this extraordinary invention, which was certainly perfectly calculated for a state prison; as those confined might thus be constantly served without ever either seeing those
who

who attended upon them, or being seen themselves ; and was informed it had been planned and brought to perfection by a Prince of the House of Rosenwald, who had confined an unfaithful wife in that very apartment for more than twenty years.

“ On the day I resolved to make the bold, and I must own hazardous, attempt to regain my liberty, under pretence of being unusually cold, I had wrapped myself in this very pelisse ; a hat I was unprovided with, but I secreted the cap I have on, in which I frequently used to pace the adjacent gallery, in my pocket, convinced, if I could get without the castle precincts, I should suffer severely from the frosty air, after having been so long confined in very warm rooms. Money I had none, and I was equally destitute of any valuables likely to procure me any ; still I resolved to persevere in my design, and trust to Providence for extricating me from the difficulties and dangers I foresaw I should have to encounter.

“ The

“ The Princess joined me, as usual, about half an hour before dinner. I complained bitterly of the increasing coldness of the weather, declaring my blood was in a state of torpidity for want of exercise, pacing the room in a hurried manner while speaking; thus contriving, unobserved, while she was examining the windows, to find if any crevices admitted the frosty air, to lock the door by which she always entered, and pocket the key.

“ The bell for dinner rung almost as soon as I had thus laid the groundwork for my plan. I hastened to obey the summons, fastening the door after me, and seated myself at the table, without making any reply to her repeated entreaties for admittance. I knew that any noise she might chuse to make, would not have been of much avail; besides, I trusted to the fears she entertained of letting any of her household know she had a prisoner within the walls, as she had repeatedly told me no one but herself, her own woman, whom I had seen on board the vessel, and my two
jailers,

jailers, knew I was in the Castle, therefore having thus far succeeded, I determined to proceed.

“ I ate a very hearty meal, and took care to let her know I was thus busily employed, though I made no reply to her continued entreaties for admittance.

“ The different courses were served as usual: but before I gave the signal for the dessert to be removed, having cleared the table of all the fruit, wine, &c. I stretched myself upon it; and upon ringing the bell, was in a few seconds mounted into a very lofty room over the one I had thus quitted. Two men in the Rosenwald livery, who were in waiting to clear the table, started back upon seeing me rise. I affected to laugh, giving them to understand what I had done was out of joke, and that the Princess was enjoying the trick; fear, however, seemed to have taken such possession of them, they ran down a large staircase, their speed increasing upon finding I followed them; and thus we reached the entrance hall, where I lost sight of my guides:
but

but perceiving the drawbridge was down, and conscious I had no time to lose, I hurried across the court, and in a few seconds was without the castle walls. Convinced I should be almost immediately pursued, I flew rather than walked, till I reached the adjoining forest, where, in spite of the increasing frost, I remained concealed till night-fall, when I pursued my journey by the light and direction of the stars.

“ As I spoke very little German, and had, I knew, a vast many fortified towns to pass ere I could reach any port where I could embark for England, I foresaw I should be obliged to give some account of myself before I should be permitted to proceed: and all-powerful as I knew the Princess to be, I began to fear she would thus be enabled to trace my route, and perhaps compel me to return to my late abode.

“ I had heard you mention a friend of your father's, Henry, who was settled at Heidelberg, therefore resolved to bend my
steps

steps thither. However, before I had quitted the Forest of Rosenwald, I was surrounded by a troop of Austrian Hussars. I pleaded ignorance of the language to their repeated questions of whom I was, whence I came, and where I was going? The Officer, therefore, thought it necessary to interrogate me in very bad French.

“I was going to Heidelberg I told him, and acknowledged I was an Englishman; but not caring to be equally explicit as to where I came from, being besides rather curiously dressed for walking, and having nothing about me that could lead to any discovery, I was immediately taken into custody as a suspicious person, or more properly a French spy.

“Till then I had not heard that hostilities had commenced between the French and all the surrounding nations. I only requested to be conducted to the General who commanded in that district;—my wishes were complied with; and I have seldom met with a politer man than the Count de Lentulus, who readily granted

granted me a private audience ; in return for which, I gave him the heads of my story, expatiating upon my late confinement, and particularly explaining how I had procured my release from the Castle of Rosenwald. He repeatedly assured me he put the most implicit faith in my veracity ; and knew the lady who had kept me enthralled, was capable of still more daring actions to gratify her prevalent passions. He supposed I did not wish her to escape unpunished. He was intimately acquainted with her late husband's uncle, who would inherit the Lindenfelt estates at her death : he was a most excellent man, and he was certain would see I had justice done me ; besides, he thought I had much better proceed to Vienna, as without a passport I should certainly not be permitted to leave Austria ; acknowledging, though he was convinced of the truth of what I had uttered, he must, in conformity to his military duty, send me thither under a guard. The British Envoy

then resident there, would doubtless procure my immediate liberation; and he would, with my leave, trouble me with a letter to his friend, the Prince of Ermanstadt, who he thought ought to be made acquainted with the Princess of Lindensfelt's late conduct.

“ I had no alternative but to comply with a good grace: suffice it to say, upon my arrival at Vienna, the British Envoy behaved in the most obliging, friendly manner, nor was the Prince of Ermanstadt, who procured me a private audience with his Imperial Majesty, less polite; and as I found the Envoy considered my imprisonment as an insult to the British nation, and the Prince thought the Princess deserved at least to endure a similar confinement, giving me to understand the prodigious power and credit of her family had alone prevented her from having long since been shut up in a state prison, I found it necessary to agree to become her accuser; therefore I left Vienna with the Prince, who
has

has obtained the proper orders to secure her person, and who was provided with a detachment of Hussars to enforce them, by his friend General Lentulus; and reached this ancient Castle about nine o'clock this morning, when being informed of the Princess's illness, her physicians were sent for, before it was thought prudent to let her know of our arrival. They declared they could not be answerable for her life, were she made acquainted that she was a prisoner, such is the violence of her temper; nor could she possibly be removed till her fever abated. Proper cautions have therefore been given to her household; and her principal accomplice, if I may so style him, is already secured."

"Well if love will lead a woman the lengths it has done this Princess, 'tis a more mischievous passion than I ever conceived it to be: and that a father should combine to deprive his son of liberty, if not of life, to oblige such a female Machiavel, is infinitely

more extraordinary. For as to Mr. Egerton's puerile attempt to disown your relationship, it appears to me the most shallow scheme his fertile brain ever engendered; he certainly deserves to be publicly exposed, as but for Lord St. Osyth, he would, ere this, in consequence of being your heir, have taken possession of your seat in Wiltshire, and all your other property: and this at the very time he was endeavouring to make you believe you were not his son. Surely neither treachery nor duplicity were ever before carried such lengths."

"Sincerely do I wish he could prove I was not his son," cried Lord Delmont, "though I begin to fear his letter to the Princess was only an artifice they hoped would promote their wishes; for I think him much more to blame than the woman who, though she took a very improper, and certainly a very unlawful method, still wished to render me an object of general envy.—Could I with any honour, or without having given the

the Emperor, the Prince of Ermanstadt, and the British Minister reason to doubt my veracity, have objected to accompany the party to Rosenwald?—I should certainly, ere this, have been upon my road to England; but untoward circumstances forced me to become the Princess's accuser, and I must maintain what I have advanced: but believe me, I am far more anxious to know whether any degree of consanguinity does subsist between me and Mr. Egerton. Would I could get possession of the letter I have mentioned!"

"We will think of some plan to induce him, if he has not absolutely forgot how to speak the truth," replied the Colonel.—"As for the letter, he will either swear he did not write it, or that he permitted himself to form so innocent an artifice merely to induce you to accept the most splendid offers any man ever had or ever will have. What a pity he was not at liberty to become your rival! I am convinced he would not have rejected such a woman, let her past conduct have been ever

so dishonourable. But had you married the Princess, I am convinced it was never intended you should have returned to England; therefore I consider her quite as insincere as the double-faced Counsellor."

A summons to dinner put a stop, for the present, to their conversation.

In the eating-room they found the Prince, the officers belonging to the regiment of Hussars which surrounded the Castle, and the two physicians.

The Princess was still ignorant that she was a prisoner in her own house.

"I cannot conceive who it was so opportunely found in the Forest of Rosenwald, to represent Lord Dehmont," said the Prince.

"I begin to think that the Princess had familiar spirits at her beck and call," replied one of the physicians; "for really the
hair,

hair, size, and stature of the murdered person might have led even a friend of Lord Delmont's into a belief that it was him."

"I find, when your Lordship so dexterously planned and concerted your escape," rejoined the Prince, "you were actually taken for the ghost of your representative by the servants who first saw you, and the porter at the gate. But pray remember, though I am really unwillingly obliged to detain you at Rosenwald, every thing within the Castle is at your orders; and if you wish to send off an express, one of my own servants shall proceed even to London, if you chuse it, with your commands."

"I think we had better defer writing, my Lord," said Colonel O'Hallaran, "till we see what to-morrow produces."

Montague, who particularly wished to take the Counsellor by surprise, though he had not even mentioned his being concerned in the matter to either the Prince or the British Envoy, agreed that it might be as well to postpone, till the next

day, addressing his friends in England; though he was as anxious to relieve the minds of Lords Fitzarran and St. Osyth, as he was to hear the Counsellor either affirm or contradict what he had dared, for the most sinister views, to assert.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

THE physicians had returned to their patient soon after dinner; and the other gentlemen were still endeavouring to fortify themselves against the cold by repeated bumpers of excellent Rhenish, when the elder of the disciples of Esculapius returned with visible alarm depicted upon his countenance.

“How is the Princess?” asked Lord Delmont.

“Furious, distracted, my Lord! While we were at dinner, her confidential woman imprudently informed her that the Castle was surrounded by armed soldiers, and that sentinels

were placed at every entrance. Fortunately she could tell her no more ; but the idea of being a prisoner was sufficient. She started out of bed, insisted upon being dressed, and has declared she will not take another moment's repose till she has settled all her worldly affairs ; and is actually writing and dictating to two secretaries who are sitting near her."

"Does she know I am in the Castle?" asked Lord Delmont, really shocked to learn the situation she was in.

"No, my Lord ; nor is she aware that the Prince of Ermanstadt is so near. Her own particular attendants have not been suffered to leave the apartments appropriated to her use, since the sentinels have been placed ; therefore they could only acquaint her with what they knew themselves."

"Does she still retain her senses?" enquired the Prince.

"Her faculties are not at all impaired," replied the physician.—"She dictates with the utmost precision to her secretaries, and gives

orders to her women with equal perspicuity. She insisted upon my colleague and me leaving the room, and said she would let us know when she had leisure to listen to our advice. We were therefore obliged to obey her orders; indeed it would be useless to contend with so determined a spirit, though her strength will doubtless soon fail her, and she may then be rather more tractable."

"She is and ever has been a most extraordinary character," said the Prince of Ermanstadt.—"Born with very strong passions, her will has hitherto ever been her law; she is therefore really become a very dangerous woman, and must have some restraint placed upon her licentious desires. God forbid I should wish, by way of getting possession of her fortune, to doom her to perpetual confinement! I trust, as both Lord Delmont and myself wish to favour her, she will only be condemned to spend a year or so in this or the Castle of Lindensfelt, by way of doing penance for her late unwarrantable behaviour."

One of her secretaries now entered the saloon, to say that the Princess wished to see the two gentlemen who had arrived at Rosenwald the day before, immediately, if possible.

“ By all means obey her summons,” said the Prince.—“ She must be humoured in her present frame of mind ; endeavour to soothe her into composure. We shall leave it to your own discretion to inform her or not, that Lord Delmont and myself are in the house.”

The Colonel and Henry, promising to be guided by circumstances, rose to follow the secretary, who conducted them into a magnificent bed-chamber, at the door of which stood two sentinels ; where, seated in a large arm-chair, they found the Princess, who was still writing as fast as she could. She made them a sign to advance, and pointed to two chairs which had been
which

placed at a little distance from the table, at which she continued her occupation, regardless of their presence, though her whole frame was so much agitated, that she was sometimes obliged to use her other hand to support and guide the one with which she wrote.

Her attendants all silently withdrew the moment the gentlemen entered.

At last, after a pause of near five minutes, she threw down her pen, saying, "I believe that will do. You must excuse me, Colonel, and you, Mr. Melcombe—I have learned your names, you perceive. I wished to finish what I was about before my strength failed me. You, Colonel, are related, I understand, to Lord Delmont—you, Mr. Melcombe I have seen before. I presume you know that I am a prisoner in the Castle of my ancestors; no doubt by the desire of your nephew—and your friend, young gentleman. Pray where is he now?"

We

"We thought his remains were contained in the coffin we were shewn upon our arrival," replied the Colonel, evading giving a direct reply.

"But you no longer think so—you must know you have been deceived. I loved him! Oh, no language can give you the faintest idea of the affection I bore him, nor of the sacrifices I would have made to obtain his love! I should even at this moment resign my breath without a murmur, if my death would increase his felicity."

"I protest I scarcely understand your Serene Highness," replied the Colonel. "Pray whose body was found in the neighbouring forest?"

"Not your friend's. But before I proceed to satisfy your curiosity, swear—here is a Bible for the purpose—swear you will give this casket into his own hands; it contains a few jewels which I wish him to present to the happy woman he honours with his choice, and the whole of my correspondence with his unworthy father, who is a villain—a base, cowardly

cowardly wretch, who conceals the depravity of his heart under a smooth tongue and a fair outside semblance!—How unlike his noble son!—No, they can never be so nearly related. Nay, once the plausible rogue swore bitterly—swore the godlike Delmont was not his child; but afterwards, when pressed by me to confirm his assertion, he meanly prevaricated, and said he was not the child of his affection. But why do I tire you with expressing my contempt of such a being?—Besides the correspondence I have mentioned, I have enclosed a power, which was executed when I was last in England, for him to receive what property I have in the Dutch, English, Genoese, and Venetian Banks; a mere trifle—hardly worth the acceptance of a man of his independent principles: but I am resolved it shall not increase the wealth of those the law makes my heirs. Here is also a deed of gift, executed at the same time (but not, any more than the other, in his base father's office, as I dreaded that wretch, whom I always despised, though my gold made him my tool, would insert
some

some clause that might give him a future claim to what I meant to give his son), by which I make over this Castle and all its dependancies, to Montague Egerton O'Brien, Baron Delmont, and his heirs for ever. I have confirmed this latter gift in a will I have made within this hour; though this deed, which was drawn by one of the first lawyers in Great Britain, is perfectly valid and indisputable. But I wish to convince the world how much I adored the man whose indifference has broke my heart. I have sealed this casket, and here is the key; so now swear to deliver it into the hands of your friend."

The gentlemen complied with her strange request; and she immediately gave the box to the Colonel, who assured her he would never trust it out of his sight till he had, according to his oath, delivered it up to his friend.

"I have still a great many things to say to you."

you. Pray, Mr. Melcombe, give me a glass of wine; there are a bottle and glasses upon that marble table. My spirits rather fail me."

"I am fearful your Serene Highness's physicians——"

"Do you suppose I attend to, or am to be ruled by two such old fools as those?" interrupting him.—"I must have what I desire, and you will only oblige me to rise myself, if you refuse to bring it me."

Henry no longer objected, as he was very unwilling her spirits should fail her before she had elucidated several things he could not at present fathom; he therefore filled her a bumper.

She thanked him, and having hastily swallowed it, exclaimed "Were I never to drink again, it might perhaps be as well; but you must be anxious to know what has become of your friend; I suppose he is at Vienna. The Commanding Officer belonging to the troops which surround the Castle, will doubtless be able

to

to inform you. I was in hopes Lord Delmont was returned to England; but he has acted more wisely in first delivering me up to justice. I am sensible I deserve no mercy; therefore tell him, should I never see him again, I sincerely forgive him. He could scarcely hope to escape some future snare, if he had not denounced me before the Aulic Tribunal.

“ My passions were never restrained in my youth; of course they grew with my growth, and increased with my strength; and I candidly acknowledge, there have been times when I should scarcely have hesitated to have committed the most atrocious action, had such a one been likely to further any of my schemes. Your friend is not yet acquainted with half my guilt.

“ I was ever fearful of lowering myself in his esteem; but our's were not congenial minds. He intuitively shrunk from my advances, having long, I know, considered me as a woman of loose principles; the native delicacy

delicacy of his mind therefore made him revolt at the idea of the union I so much wished for; and he finally, though penniless, and totally unprovided with necessaries for a journey of any length at this rigorous season of the year, having contrived to make his escape, committed himself to the care of Providence, rather than accept of every luxury this world can afford the most devoted votaries of pleasure, because my hand was among the gifts I wished to bestow.

“ But to return to my narrative. ‘Chance, or more properly my evil genius, conducted me about fourteen months since to your aunt’s, Mr. Melcombe. She was at that time as much in love with Lieutenant O’Brien, as any woman of her advanced years could have been with so charming a man. I became her confidante, and dictated the letter in which she disclosed her passion to the handsomest man I had ever yet seen, who with that independent spirit which ever guides his actions (so unlike the mean grovelling notions of his father and grandfire, but I will never believe
he

he is an Egerton) absolutely refused the poor old soul and all her money. By way of punishing her presumption, I subjoined a few explanatory lines to a copy of the letter she sent him, and had it dropped the following day upon the Parade ; and in consequence of this manœuvre, your father, I know, took the alarm. Having induced her to write a second still more pressing letter to the insensible mortal, which proved equally unsuccessful, I set out for London, glorying in the poor old soul's bitter disappointment, which, I believe, hastened her death ; little thinking I should experience a similar mortification, which will, in all human probability, also accelerate my dissolution.

“ Counsellor Egerton had, just before this period, gained me a very important cause ; and I had it in contemplation to make him introduce me to his son, when I heard the noble man had disposed of his liberty in favour of his late wife, which overthrew all my plans, and nearly drove me to despair. From that moment I madly resolved, if I could

could not make him happy, to render him miserable; in consequence, after having myself seduced him into error, I wrote an account of our meeting to his wife: but never succeeded, in various other attempts, to make her jealous. I know Lord Delmont even now suspects I was the author of these anonymous letters—nay, he has frequently asked me the question; but I have always strenuously denied the fact, still flattering myself he would sooner or later relent, and accept my proffered hand.

“Not succeeding in rendering him unhappy, I next determined to have him brought, by some stratagem, to this very Castle, merely to gratify my own passion; and to part him from a woman I abhorred.

“I had frequently sounded the Counsellor at a distance, and soon discovered he would say and unsay, do and undo, the same things twenty times in an hour, in proportion to the proffered bribe: I therefore boldly put him into my confidence; and he, for a *douceur* of five thousand pounds, undertook to have his son

son put on board a vessel I had at that time laying in the Thames, without affording any soul breathing the least clue to trace his route, or ever to discover the place of his abode ; only requesting one of my people, upon whom I could depend, might take a lodging in Scotland Yard—under any name, it mattered not.

“ The fellow who brought you the news of Lord Delmont’s death, readily undertook to personate an Irish gentleman ; and took up his abode for a month in a handsome house that the Counsellor had privately pointed out to him, under the name of O’Connor ; and received several letters from me during that period, directed to Martin O’Connor, Esq. But I need not tell you how the Counsellor contrived to have Lord Delmont kidnapped, who, if he had not been rescued as he was, would, in another hour, have been under sail for Germany.

“ I need not tell you what a disappointment I sustained when this scheme failed ; nor how I raved at the dastardly Egerton, who

who might as well have had your friend at once conveyed on board my vessel, instead of having had him taken to his wretched accomplice's; but he was so fearful of being suspected, he would have his own way, and thus our scheme failed. But in my first transports I had assured Egerton I would make his part in that iniquitous scheme public; he therefore bound himself, by the most horrid oath, to make me mistress of his son's person, though his own reputation should be utterly ruined by the attempt. By my desire, however, he formed no other plans just then; and not long after, Lady Delmont died.

“ My hopes now all revived; and long before decency could authorize my conduct, I made the young widower an offer of my hand, pledging my honour to prove myself worthy of his choice. A mortifying, frigid refusal was the result of my condescension. I tore my hair—in short, acted the part of a maniac in my first paroxysms of despair.

“ Egerton

“ Egerton renewed his former oath; declaring he would put him into my power, if I would, on my side, swear he should never return to England, solemnly protesting he was not his son. But this he now contradicts, though I believe he told truth at first.

“ How I succeeded in my late plan, I shall leave your friend to relate. I merely wished to convince both you and him I was never worthy of his choice ; and that his real, or I hope, his supposed father is an execrable villain.

“ But give me another glass of wine. I have still that to reveal which will make you shudder. I must have it—my mouth is parched.”

Melcombe presented her with another bumper, and she proceeded.

“ I should have told you that I had also promised that vile Egerton to contrive some plan to deceive Lord Fitzarran, Lord St. Osyth—in short, every body interested in the
event

event, into a belief of Lord Delmont's death.

" Were I at this moment addressing my Creator, I could not be more sincere in my horrid confession ; therefore I must candidly acknowledge, it was very far from my intention, when I left England, to have kept any of those promises I had so solemnly made that wretch. But he not chusing to confirm that Lord Delmont was not his son, nor to let me know who his real parents were, I resolved to deceive him in my turn, and to let him, upon the false report of his death, take possession of his son's fortune, when, if he hesitated any longer either to acknowledge Delmont was his child, or, if not, to declare who his parents were, I resolved to threaten to set my prisoner at liberty, and thus deprive him of the estate and fortune he has so long coveted.

" Two men, and one woman servant, were alone in my confidence ; having never scrupled to obey my most extravagant commands.

But one of them (the man I sent to England) told me, about two months after your friend had been brought here, his companion in iniquity began to grumble at being so closely confined, and had often hinted what a large reward might be obtained by going to England, and making Lord Delmont's situation known to his grandfather.

“ Knowing, by experience, that when a confidant in such plots begins to waver, he or she are no longer to be trusted, I told Rushvan to encourage his notion of impeaching, that we might be able to judge if such were his real intentions ;—he followed my advice.

“ The traitor proposed setting off privately, and advised him to get all he could out of me, and then join him in London, where he made no doubt he should be maintained in idleness for the future. The sorry rascal was a tall, well-made figure ; I therefore desired Rushvan to advise him to dress himself in Lord Delmont's suit of mourning, which

which had been carefully laid by, as such a disguise would facilitate his escape, and effectually mislead me, should I cause him to be pursued.

“ I can hardly relate the sequel, though I laid the horrid plan. Rushvan, however, having first assisted him to dress, wishing to make him as nearly as possible resemble Lord Delmont, got him, unperceived by the rest of the servants, out of the Castle ; and then, under pretence of setting him forward upon his journey, walked with him to the entrance of the forest, where, dropping behind, he discharged a double-barrelled pistol through the unsuspecting victim’s head, and afterwards disfigured his face still more with powder ;—nay, gentlemen, it is I who ought to shudder. I need not add the body was found next morning, nor will I any longer trespass upon your time.

“ I shall now send for the officer who commands the troop to which I am subjected ; indeed I care not how soon I am on the road

to Vienna. It can but hasten my death ; and the sooner I am released from my present misery, the better.

“ But let me entreat you would not quit the Castle, gentlemen, till I am either better or worse. I shall think of a thousand things I wish to say to you before to-morrow :—but adieu for the present !

“ I trust those who have me in custody will not molest you ; indeed they dare not. I only wonder my late husband’s uncle did not accompany them hither. He is an excellent old man ; and I believe would have advised me for the best, had I been amenable to any sort of controul. But I will not detain you any longer, as I trust I shall see you again.”

The gentlemen therefore bowed, and retired ; the Colonel carrying with him the casket he had sworn to deliver, observing to Henry, as they crossed the numerous apartments in their way to the saloon, that Lord Delmont had been very fortunate in
escaping

escaping from such a woman, who appeared to consider a fellow-creature's life of no value, whenever it militated against her wild projects.

CHAP. IV.

THE Prince and Lord Delmont were rather impatiently waiting their return.

The Colonel, in as few words as possible, recapitulated what had passed, totally omitting her invectives against the Counsellor, and merely hinting he believed the murdered man owed his death to the jealousy of the wretch that had already been taken into custody. He then presented Lord Delmont with the casket he had sworn to deliver, assuring him the Princess had not an idea he was in the Castle ; and had told him that box contained some letters he had long wished to have in his possession, and some other valuables she
either

either formerly had, or intended to have given him.

“The letters are all I shall accept,” replied Lord Delmont, going to break the seal.

“I enter a caveat against your determination,” said the Prince, smiling, and stopping his hand, “as I must insist upon your obliging my niece. I know you are not in want of any thing she has it in her power to offer you. You have convinced both her and me, you rather despise than covet riches. But admitting she has made over the half of her possessions to you, she has done no more than her duty; and I shall not allow you to break that seal at present.”

The re-appearance of the secretary, who had come to fetch the Colonel and Henry, prevented him from proceeding, by saying that the Princess requested to see the Prince of Ermanstadt and the Major of the Hussars.

“How came she to know I was in the Castle?” hastily enquired the Prince.

“Her Serene Highness questioned me so closely concerning what officers were come to take her into custody, I unguardedly mentioned your name, your Highness; and she is now all impatience to see you.”

“You shall accompany me into her apartment, gentlemen,” said the Prince, turning to the physicians.—“We will endeavour to save her life if possible. She will certainly kill herself by these violent exertions.”

Lord Delmont being thus left alone with the Colonel and Henry, the former recapitulated, word for word, what had passed between them and the Princess.

“Unfortunate woman!” exclaimed his Lordship, “her passions have truly been her bane. As I feared, Counsellor Egerton will not confirm what he had advanced; and yet is it in nature a father would persecute a child as he has done me?—What treachery
and

and hypocrisy does every part of his conduct display ! Would to Heaven I were the son of my Swiss nurse ! What consolation would the certainty that I bore no affinity to Mr. Egerton afford me ! But can the Princess suppose I will accept of the securities you mention, and of this Castle, to the prejudice of her venerable uncle ?—I thought she would have known me better ; though indeed she has had such reason to despise the name of Egerton, I scarcely wonder at her supposing I inherit some of Lord Altamont's or the Counsellor's propensities."

" Well, but as you must glory in your maternal grandfather, that ought to reconcile you to the degree of consanguinity, which subsists between you and the Barrister ; as you must be related to both or neither," observed the Colonel.

" I certainly derive both honour, pleasure, and advantage from my affinity to Lord Fitzarran, whom I respect and esteem more than words can express ; and yet I would willingly relinquish not only every

claim to his title and estate, but also to every shilling, and every foot of land I inherit from my late wife, to have it satisfactorily proved I owe no filial duty to Mr. Egerton. Even now I can remember with indignation our first interview, when he coldly informed me I was his natural son ;—how repulsive was it to my proud heart to address him as my father ! and how little did my feelings accord with the few incoherent words I uttered !—However, if I am unfortunate enough to be his son, his late behaviour has severed every natural tie ; and I here solemnly disclaim all future connection with a man I much more than despise.”

The Prince of Ermanstadt returned as he concluded.

“ My amiable young friend,” he cried, as he entered, “ much against my will, knowing how averse you are to an interview with my niece, I have been forced to acknowledge you returned with me from Vienna ;

Vienna ; for she absolutely required me, as I hoped for happiness in this world, and salvation in the world to come, to tell her truly where you were. The injunction was too solemn to be trifled with. She entreats, on her knees, to see you ; vowing, if you refuse to attend her, she will be brought down stairs, though the effort should cost her her life. She also requests the attendance of your friends."

His Lordship, already much agitated, was seriously hurt at this summons.

" Believe me," the Prince proceeded, " it was as painful to me to make the request, as I am fearful it will be to you to comply with her wishes. All that astonishes me is, how she can bear up in the manner she does against a raging fever, which increases every moment ; or how she retains her senses, for she has drank a bottle of Tokay, in defiance of her physician's prohibitions ; and has invariably flung every draught they have presented

presented her, into the fire. She is now preaching repentance to her faithful accomplice, whom she acknowledges killed the man who lies in the chapel, at her instigation. But will you suffer me to precede you into her apartment?"

"I certainly cannot refuse to see her Serene Highness," replied his Lordship; "besides I wish to restore this casket to her."

"Let me entreat you would not drive her to desperation by what she would now consider as a mark of contempt; besides, it would really prove of no avail, because she has confirmed every donation she has so properly made you, by a will, which is now in my possession. She read it in the presence of all her domestics, who were purposely summoned; and has very unnecessarily imprecated the most dreadful curses upon me and mine, should I presume to dispute, or not fulfil any one article it contains. My solemn promise, to consider every word as sacred, has rather soothed her perturbed spirits; but they

they will soon burst forth in a flame, if we keep her much longer in suspense."

Lord Delmont therefore slowly rose, and taking Henry's arm, followed the Prince and the Colonel into her apartment.

As they entered first, she hastily exclaimed, "He will not come near me then! But see him I will, or ——"

She paused upon seeing him enter. He had thrown off his pelisse and cap, and was dressed in a plain suit of mourning he had had made at Vienna. The pensive cast of his features added to the interest his countenance never failed to inspire, and his fine auburn hair, which had for some time only been dressed by the graceful hand of Nature, combined to exhibit, to particular advantage, a face almost too handsome for his sex.

The Princess started from her seat, straining every power of sight to gaze at the man
she

she had so long and so fervently adored. Then wildly dropping on her knees, she exclaimed, "Father of Mercy, spare thine unworthy servant! Surely some blessed spirit, inshrined in an earthly form, now deludes my wandering imagination!" hiding her face in the chair she had rose from, and sobbing aloud.

Lord Delmont had stopped, irresolute whether to advance or retreat, just within the door.

His former jailer, handcuffed and fettered in his turn, stood between two Hussars, with drawn sabres in their hands.

The physicians and several female attendants were behind her chair; the Major of the Hussars stood near the fire, towards which the Prince and Colonel had also advanced; but no one seemed to dare to break the awful silence which prevailed, till raising her head, she said, in an authoritative tone, "I wish to
be

be left with Lord Delmont and his friends, if I am still at liberty to give orders in my own house."

The physicians and women precipitately withdrew at one door; while the Prince, benignantly smiling, made a motion for the Major to precede him out of the one by which he had entered, who having given a signal to the Hussars, they were leading out their prisoner, when the Princess waved her hand for them to stop.

"Miserable Rushvan!" she exclaimed, "my trusty accomplice, may thy fate be a warning to every wretch who suffers avarice to make them subservient to the most iniquitous command!—It was certainly thy interest, but Heaven knows it was not thy duty, to obey me:—hadst thou been less devoted, I had now been less wretched. Lead him away; but remember, Prince, if he was the perpetrator, I was the planner of the deed for which

which he is about to suffer, and my rank ought not to screen me from sharing his punishment. To be stretched upon the rack would be a trifling agony to the mental torture I have, and still endure."

The door was now closed upon the prisoner; and she beckoned Lord Delmont to advance.

"I had vainly fancied, much-injured and much-beloved youth, thou wert almost exempt from the frailty of human nature; yet surely revenge is not a Christian virtue:—and what else, since thou hadst escaped, and must know thou left me broken-hearted, couldst have induced thee to denounce me to the Aulic Tribunal?"

"So base a passion never yet actuated my conduct. Had I been permitted to escape unmolested, I should have left you to the reproaches of your own conscience; but I was compelled to relate my story in my own defence." He then repeated every thing that had occurred

occurred from the time he was taken into custody in the Forest of Rosenwald.

She burst into tears as he concluded his recital.

“Equally noble, equally generous has your conduct been throughout. Fain, methinks, would I have found you to blame. My thirst increases; give me something to drink, dearest Delmont; one glass from your hand will allay my torments.”

“What can I present you, that it will be proper you should take?”

“I see nothing here but wine; endeavour is more likely to support my spirits presented me out a tumbler from that bottle don’t hesitate—my tongue cleaves my mouth.”

“I hardly dare comply with your request.”

“I can’t bear contradiction.”

He did as she desired. She caught hold of

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“ What can I present you, that it will be proper you should take?”

“ I see nothing here but wine; wine is more likely to support my spirits than water. Give me out a tumbler from that bottle. I don't hesitate—my tongue cleaves to my mouth.”

“ I hardly dare comply with your request.”

“ I can't bear contradiction.”

He did as she desired. She caught hold of

of the hand he extended, which she pressed to her burning lips, at the same time throwing the glass into the fire.

“How could it enter my head, that thou couldst ever be actuated by revenge! Happy, thrice happy Miranda! for Delmont still mourns thy loss”—alluding to his dress—

“yet her love was trifling when compared to mine! Couldst thou have even guessed the excess of that passion which now consumes me, I should certainly have obtained thy pity.

But I only wished to see thee once more

die, or am dragged from hence

thou born, or rather why wert

led to lead me on to destruction?

Heaven only knows what will be my

ould I survive my trial; an ignominy

death most probably awaits me!”

“Heaven forbid!” exclaimed the

agitated Delmont.—“Surely there are

yet ways and means to save you. Your

uncle ——”

“Can

"Can do nothing in my behalf; you alone can save me from perdition. Consider well my situation, and remember that love for you has occasioned all my errors—all my crimes I ought to say. Still criminal and degraded as I acknowledge myself to be, can you doom me to perish on the scaffold—to expire on the rack, because I adored, nay idolized you, Delmont? You alone are my accuser, and must come forward upon my trial, except indeed you deign to accept my hand."

Thus assailed, Delmont could no longer conceal his emotion, while in vain endeavouring to disperse the rising tear, he presented her with his hand.

"Do with me what your Highness please!"

"Would you then," she exclaimed, grasping the proffered hand, "would you unite your fate to that of the wretch before you?"

"I will

"I will do any thing to save you from the horrid death I even shudder to mention," faintly smiling.

"This is a triumph indeed. Once with what transport should I have accepted this dear hand! I wish I could thank you as I ought, most generous of men. But I will not degrade my noble Delmont by taking a base advantage of his humanity; for am I not a murderer? You startle; fear not—I will never accept thy hand. May some angel in a human form, some congenial spirit make thee as happy as thou deservest to be, then will thy felicity be complete. But beware of Egerton, that fiend in human shape: he never can be thy father! A thought strikes me—reach me my pen and ink."

She was obeyed.

Hastily writing a few lines, she presented him with the paper.

"Before

" Before you let him know I am gone to answer for my sins towards my Maker and you, Lord Delmont, I conjure you to give him that note ; it may force him to some explanation. Read it to your friends."

He did as she desired. It ran thus :—

" SIR,

" To remind a man of your character and profession that he stands bound, by the most solemn oath, to tell the bearer of this letter, now Prince of Rosenwald, who were his real parents, will probably be of little avail : only let me assure you, should you fail in either proving, beyond a doubt, that he is your son, or, *vice versa*, in convincing him he is the child of other till now unknown parents, the law shall force you to do him justice. He is acquainted with every part of your conduct, and in possession of all your

your letters, as I thought it my duty to guard him against the basest of all human beings.

“THE PRINCESS OF ROSENWALD
AND LINDENFELT.”

Both the Colonel and Henry approved of what she had wrote.

Lord Delmont merely objected to her styling him Prince of Rosenwald.

“The possession of this estate confers that title upon you,” perceiving he was about making some further objections.—“Do you wish me to enjoy one moment’s peace between the present hour, and the awful summons I so soon expect? If you do, I ask it of your humanity not to reject the tokens of my affection I have made over to you. In addition to which, I must insist upon your accepting the wardrobe I had provided for you; the

the furs are worth your notice. The ring you wore in memory of your late wife is in the casket I committed to the care of your friend. Wear this in remembrance of her who dies, because she is unworthy your love," taking a single brilliant, of inestimable value, off her fore-finger, and putting it on his little one.—"And here, gentlemen," taking two small parcels from behind her, "accept these trifles from a woman who has occasioned you many unhappy moments," presenting them to the Colonel and Henry, who dared not refuse her offer, sensible how much she would be irritated.—"And now, Delmont, receive my parting blessing; yet I should wish to see you again."

"I shall always be at your Highness's orders."

"May Heaven shower down its choicest blessings on thy head!" presenting him with her hand, which he silently raised to his lips.

"There, now conduct your friends to see your late prison—that door will lead you to it; and the one at the end of the long gallery,

gallery, which is no longer fastened, will take you into a library that communicates with the saloon, where you will find my uncle."

Her mouth was so parched, that it was with difficulty she uttered the last words.

Having rung for her attendants, Delmont led the way to his prison.

The saloon the Colonel and Henry agreed was magnificent; the hangings of pink velvet, bordered with silver, were nearly covered by the finest pictures of some of the first masters: a Persian carpet concealed the floor; in short, every ornament that either art or luxury could devise, was employed to embellish this spacious apartment. In the eating-room they admired the pillars which concealed the machinery belonging to the dining-table; nor was the bedchamber less deserving their notice; every painting, mirror, or other embellishment had here some reference to the Princess's passion for its late inhabitant. The
costly

costly embroidered velvet canopy, from which the not less superb curtains belonging to the bed depended, appeared supported in the air by four Cupids, who, in the other hand held large bunches of poppies, which they were in the act of shaking over those who sought repose beneath its shade; every other decoration corresponded with the bed, and all evinced the Princess's love and taste. Having satisfied their curiosity, they returned to the Prince. The physicians were with their patient, but joined them at supper, that, by the general desire of the company, was served in the room from which Lord Delmont had escaped; who all declared such a notion would never have entered their imagination.

The Princess afforded them full scope for conversation. She had suffered herself to be once more put to bed, from which the physicians now began seriously to doubt whether she would ever rise again; and before the company retired for the night, they were

informed that she was delirious. It was only wonderful, they all agreed, she had not sooner lost her senses, considering the quantity of wine she had drank. The following day her danger increased ; and early the succeeding morning she expired, the victim of her passions and crimes !

CHAP. V.

THE day before the Princess's demise, Henry Melcombe's servant had been dispatched with letters from Lord Delmont and the Colonel, to Lords Fitzarran and St. Osyth.

They had, as briefly as possible, recounted what the reader is already acquainted with ;

with ; Lord Delmont only requesting that Mr. Egerton might remain in total ignorance of the past, present, and future, till his arrival in London, promising to dispatch a second express as soon as they could fix a time for their departure for England.

Few people were perhaps less regretted than the unfortunate Princess of Rosenwald. The Prince of Ermanstadt dismissed the armed guard which surrounded the Castle as soon as he learned she was no more ; and then seriously requested Lord Delmont would take possession of the mansion and demesnes ; which that Nobleman as peremptorily refused, immediately breaking the seal of his casket, and throwing the deed of gift which made this estate over to him, into the flames.

Finding it in vain to contend with him, the Prince agreed to retain the noble family mansion, but would not even look at the

securities or jewels which remained in the casket, declaring he hardly knew whether he should not bring down upon his head the imprecations of his late relation, for permitting him to wave his claim to Rosenwald.

As nothing now detained the three gentlemen in Germany, a second express was dispatched to Lord St. Olyth, to inform him they meant to leave the Castle on the following day, as the Princess's death had rendered it unnecessary for Lord Delmont to return to Vienna. They should therefore proceed as expeditiously as possible to Hamburgh, where they intended to embark, and hoped to meet Lord Fitzarran at Yarmouth, still requesting the Counsellor might be kept in total ignorance of the late events in Germany; and the same evening every preparation was made for their departure.

In compliance with the Princess's wishes, Lord Delmont gave orders to have the wardrobe

wardrobe she had prepared for him packed up, meaning to present the greatest part of it to Martin when they reached England; not conceiving, except for a masquerade habit, the Russian habiliments would ever be of the least service to him.

The casket contained all the late Princess's jewels of every denomination, and of enormous value, and various securities for money, to the amount of an hundred and eighteen thousand pounds; besides every letter she had received from, or wrote to Mr. Egerton; and his Lordship's watch, purse, and mourning ring for Lady Delmont.

To Henry she had given a diamond ring and shirt pin; and to the Colonel her watch, and an antique ring of superior beauty.

The correspondence merely detailed more at length the various artifices both Mr. Eger-

ton and she had had recourse to, to draw Lord Delmont into their snares.

In answer to her last letter, in which she particularly pressed him to let her know who his Lordship really was, he affected to be surprised at the enquiry, alledging he had only wrote the letter she had shewn his *son*, to induce him to accept her hand; declaring he could not have supposed she would have imagined that there was any truth in what he advanced, as it was not likely he should ever have acknowledged any other person's child as his heir, to the detriment of his other sons. Nor could he believe Delmont was ever the dupe of a mere scheme to frighten him into compliance with her wishes, as few men of his age had more sense, or were less credulous.

"Have you any doubts remaining respecting your birth?" asked Colonel O'Hallaran, after Lord Delmont had read this letter.

"Upon

“ Upon my honour they are as strong as ever,” he replied ; “ though I begin to doubt whether I shall ever be able to make Mr. Egerton speak the truth.”

“ This is being an absolute sceptic. Egerton is a vile character, but he is not mad ; and what, short of insanity, could have induced him to acknowledge the legitimacy of your birth, certain by such a step he deprived his other sons of both the Fitzarran and Altamont titles and estates, had you been the child of any other person, living or dead ? For argument’s sake, we will suppose some friend of this man died, no matter where, and left his infant son under his care, and possibly a fortune he might wish to secure to his own family, by bringing up his ward as his natural son ; but would he ever have placed this ward between his own children and two titles ? Besides some account must have been given of this friend’s child ; there would have been heirs or some relations to have made enquiries ; therefore I can’t believe

believe you are this ward. I certainly wish he was a better man, since I am absolutely convinced he is your father ;—so let me request you would get rid of the scruples I know have arisen in your mind respecting your right to the Fitzarran and Altamont titles ; at all events, as you very properly mean to keep no measures with him upon your return, depend upon it he will keep none with you : so if he can deprive you of any right or title, I am certain he will oblige you so far ; and the Princess's letter is perfectly calculated to produce the desired effect."

Delmont agreed, when he found himself completely unmasked, that he might, if he could prove his assertion, endeavour to lower him in the eyes of the world.

" But, as I have frequently both thought and said," he proceeded, " I shall rejoice, supposing my parents are among the middling, or even lower class, if I am
not

not either the legitimate or natural son of the Honourable Charles Egerton."

The following morning, attended by several German servants belonging to their amiable host, and amply provided with every convenience likely to render their journey agreeable, they set out for Hamburgh. We will therefore leave them to pursue their route, while we once more return to England.

CHAP. VI.

HAVING made all possible expedition, and been favoured by the wind, Henry Melcombe's valet reached London on the fourteenth evening after he had left Rosenwald ; and, in obedience to the strict orders he had received, proceeded, without going home, to Whitehall ; his master having told him he was neither to be publicly seen in London, nor to mention where he had been, nor what had occurred, till Lord Delmont, the Colonel, and himself returned to England.

He was totally unknown to Lord St. Osyth's servants ; but upon saying he had a packet of the utmost importance to deliver
into

into that Nobleman's hands, he was immediately admitted into his Lordship's private study ; and being not a little elated at having been fixed upon in preference to Martin, to bring the news to England of Lord Delmont's resurrection, Lord St. Ofsyth thought his countenance announced him to be the bearer of agreeable intelligence.

As he took the Colonel's letter, which he had been particularly ordered to deliver first, out of his hand, his Lordship said—"Your master and Colonel O'Hallaran are well, I hope?"

"I left all the gentlemen in excellent health and spirits, my Lord ; and I am sure that letter will confirm my words."

His Lordship doubted whether he understood the man, who did not appear to be in liquor ; he therefore anxiously enquired what he meant.

"Pray read the Colonel's letter, my Lord. I am sure it contains no bad news ;

and I have another letter for your Lordship, and two for Lord Fitzarran."

"Don't keep me any longer in suspense, my honest fellow; you have certainly some meaning. Lord Delmont—— Speak I request!"

"Why then, my Lord, don't be too much surprised, but the other letter is from Lord Delmont himself; and here it is—you know his hand."

Lord St. Osyth generally acted with prudence and deliberation; but his impatience to communicate these joyful tidings to Lord Fitzarran, made him deviate from his general rule on the present occasion, as he had actually reached his hat, and was going to run into Park Lane with his letters in his hand, if the valet had not ventured to hint that he believed Lord Delmont did not wish the contents of the packet he had brought, to be made public, repeating the very particular orders he had himself received.

"I thank

“ I thank you for your timely caution, my friend ; sit down. When I have read my letters, I shall better know how to proceed,” breaking the seal of Lord Delmont’s epistle.

The scene of villany it unfolded shocked more than astonished him, as he had from the first entertained an idea that Mr. Egerton was at the bottom of his son-in-law’s disappearance.

The Colonel’s epistle was a mere confirmation of what the former advanced ; and concluded, as he did, by requesting the circumstance of Lord Delmont’s being so unexpectedly restored to his friends, might be kept a profound secret till that Nobleman returned to London ; who hoped, by taking the Counsellor by surprise, to extort something like truth from him.

Having mentally returned his thanks where they were most due, for what, all things considered, he termed Lord Delmont’s miraculous

lous escape, he asked the messenger how his Lordship did?

“ I never saw his Lordship look better, my Lord. I am sure he frightened Mr. Martin and me finely when we first saw him; for the servants at the Castle had assured us his ghost haunted the old mansion.”

“ I can conceive your terror,” replied the Peer, smiling. “ But as it will be proper you should keep out of sight till the gentlemen return, I will send you down to Richmond, where you will run no risk of being questioned, nor indeed of being seen by any body we wish to keep in ignorance of what has passed in Germany; and as to my household resident there, refer them to me if they enquire why I sent you thither. You must be very much fatigued; so take a postchaise at the nearest livery stable, and proceed to my villa without loss of time. I will give you a line to the steward.”

This

This being done, and the man having taken his leave, his Lordship began to reflect how he ought to break the agreeable tidings to Lord Fitzarran, whom the Counsellor, notwithstanding the cool reception he generally met with, daily visited, sensible it was very much to his interest to keep upon apparent intimate terms with both the Earl and Lord St. Osyth; who, ordering his carriage, hastened into Park Lane, determined to be guided by circumstances in making his intended communications.

Mr. Egerton had but just left Delmont House when he arrived.

“No news yet from Germany?” exclaimed the old Peer as he entered. “Surely we shan’t be kept in this tormenting state of suspense much longer; even Egerton declares his surprise that the travellers have not yet found means to let us know whether they have reached Rosenwald, and
4 whether

whether any thing has transpired likely to lead to a discovery of the assassins."

"I don't at all wonder at the Counsellor's anxiety; he may have reasons for being thus impatient, of which you are not absolutely aware."

"If I was but sure he had, Lord St. Osyth, I would have him taken up upon suspicion, so help me, God! I attributed his visible impatience only to his anxiety to have the funeral over, that he might get possession of our dear Delmont's fortune."

"I only hope he will be disappointed."

The Earl sorrowfully shook his head, saying, while he wiped away the starting tear, "I have lost all hopes, except of bringing the murderers to justice. Have you the slightest reason to believe that fellow, that Egerton? I almost fancy at times I can read guilt upon his countenance. Should I ever discover he was at all accessory to his son's leaving England, which could be with no other

other view but to have him made away with, I would spend every shilling I am worth but I would bring him to the gallows !”

Lord St. Osyth smiled.—“ You seem warm this evening, my good friend.”

“ The sight of that man is sure to agitate me, though I hardly know why. He has been tormenting me with enquiries this evening as to where I thought my hapless boy ought to be interred. He fancies, I believe, my heart is as callous as his own : I perceive he wishes to be making preparations for the melancholy occasion.”

“ Then pray humour his fancy, my good friend. Permit him to display his taste and magnificence ; depend upon it his heart is sufficiently at ease to suffer him to attend even to the most frivolous minutia upon the solemn occasion.”

Lord Fitzarran sighed.—“ If we don't soon hear from the Continent, I shall begin to fear O'Hallaran and Melcombe have fallen victims to these lawless thieves.”

“ They

“ They have not been without their fears, I can assure you, of being detained prisoners in the ancient Castle they left England to visit.”

“ How? what? have you heard? Is there any news? Yes, I see you have received some intelligence—you smile; but I will not give way to hope; the events of the first day of this year, according to my calendar, are too fresh in my memory. I believe, should I live so long, I shall never keep old style again.”

“ Now I trust you will live to keep many more new years at your own time, and that we shall never be so disagreeably prevented from drinking your last toast again.”

“ Don’t flatter me I request, Lord St. Ofyth. What is it you mean? What have you heard?”

“ I have had letters from Rosenwald I must acknowledge, and some for you; but I was fearful, if I gave them to you when I came in, your joy ——”

The

The truly enraptured grandfather burst into tears at this intelligence, which he so little expected to hear; and falling on his knees, offered up his mental thanksgivings to the Throne of Grace. Then turning to the scarcely less affected Lord St. Ofyth—"My ears certainly did not deceive me—I still have a grandson. What other tidings could afford me any joy?"

Assisting him to rise, his Lordship assured him their much-regretted Delmont not only lived, but was in perfect health and spirits; and he hoped, ere this, was on his road to England.

"That's enough for the present!" cried the animated Earl, ringing the bell.

"Your household must not yet be permitted to participate in our mutual joy," said Lord St. Ofyth.

"You have your reasons, I am convinced, for the prohibition," replied his Lordship; telling the servant who appeared, to bring in a bottle of claret and two rummers.

Having

Having drank long life and a speedy return to his grandson, the Earl requested to read his letters.

Lord St. Ofyth presented him also those which he had received, observing he believed the contents were nearly the same.

Frequent were the pauses Lord Fitzarran made whilst reading them, to vent his rage in execrations against the Counsellor.

“ I knew he was at the bottom of that d—d kidnapping scheme ; and did not I always say he was concerned in this last affair ? I only hope he will make as glorious a finish as all his vile accomplices have done ; for undoubtedly the Princess has, ere this, expiated her crimes with her life. To be sure, his behaviour towards my noble boy would warrant his assertion, that he is not his son, else that pretty fabrication appears to me the most shallow part of his deep-laid scheme ; but he must, as Delmont observes, be taken by surprise.

surprise. How shall we proceed to answer the proposed end? for publicly exposed he shall be. You led me to spare him once; but even the entreaties of his injured son shall not screen him this time from my just resentment."

Lord St. Osyth paused for a short time, and then advised Lord Fitzarran's writing, as has been already related, to the Counsellor, to delude him into a belief that the supposed corpse was on its road to England, and induce him to make every preparation for its interment.

The better to carry on the scheme, the Earl was to set out for Richmond early the following morning, from whence he could proceed *incognito* to Yarmouth, attended only by his own man and Melcombe's valet.

The Counsellor was this time completely their dupe, and supposed Lord Fitzarran was almost shunning the light of the day at
Richmond,

Richmond ; while he was, regardless of his advanced age and broken constitution, hastening to Yarmouth, to embrace his grandson the moment he landed.

Two days elapsed after his arrival in that city before the Hamburg packet appeared in the offing, which brought Lord Delmont and his fellow-travellers to England.

The meeting between the former and the Earl may be better imagined than described.

It was some time before the Irish Peer could notice the Colonel or Henry, though, upon their arrival at the inn, he gave them both a most cordial reception ; and then proceeded to amuse them with the farce which was carrying on in Park Lane, under the direction of Counsellor Egerton. And as Montague was still bent upon making that gentleman either absolutely contradict or affirm his late assertion respecting
his

his birth, in conformity to his grandfather's and friends' advice, he assumed the dress of a Russian Bayard at Romford (from whence Martin, properly instructed, was dispatched to London, to announce the approach of the travellers), meaning to lead the Counsellor to suppose he had parted with his liberty in favour of the unfortunate woman who had so lately, he rather hoped, expiated her numerous crimes by what might be termed an untimely death.

CHAP. VII.

LORD ALTAMONT having expressed both his surprise and pleasure, waited, like the rest of the company, with no small degree of impatience, for some explanation of what at present no one could fathom.

The Earl had, during this interval, given orders for all the black hangings, coffin, &c. to be removed as speedily as possible, telling the servants they must spend a joyful instead of a sorrowful evening, and appointing Martin master of the ceremonies.

Lord Delmont, having allowed the Counsellor to recover some small share of composure,

sure, presented him with the late Princess of Rosenwald's note, requesting he would publicly comply with the contents.

“No more trifling I desire, Counsellor, either with mine or this young gentleman's feelings,” said Lord Fitzarran, in an impressive tone.—“When you acknowledged he was your legitimate son by my daughter, in consideration of our near relationship, and at Lord St. Osyth's entreaty, I endeavoured to extenuate the baseness of your conduct: you have, however, very lately thought proper to disown Lord Delmont, after basely deluding him into the toils of a woman who had bribed you to take an active part in her schemes. I will be more explicit, gentlemen, when Mr. Egerton has complied with the injunction that note contains.”

In vain did the Counsellor endeavour to summon his accustomed assurance to his aid in this trying conjuncture.

That Delmont had married the Princess did not admit of a doubt. She had given him up to oblige her husband; therefore at all events, little as he was convinced the subterfuge would avail him, he must swear that the letters, he expected would be produced, were forgeries, and that he did not know the meaning of the note he held.

In consequence of this resolution, he declared that he did not understand what the Princess alluded to. Indeed his son's re-appearance, after having been thought dead, struck him as very extraordinary. He began to fancy that there was some scheme in agitation to hurt his character and reputation, and render him ridiculous.

“Matchless effrontery!” cried Lord Fitzarran.—“Now, gentlemen, I will inform you why the Counsellor was kept in ignorance of Lord Delmont's expected return, and why you were also allowed to remain in ignorance of his existence.”—He briefly recited
every

every thing that had passed at Rosenwald, till the moment Lord Delmont had nearly promised to marry the Princess; and thus continued—"It is therefore become absolutely necessary, Mr. Egerton, you should comply with Madame de Rosenwald's injunctions, which I mean strictly to enforce. Much as I love Lord Delmont, I certainly am not at liberty to consider him as my heir, except he is my daughter's son. Lord Altamont, you are also materially concerned in this young gentleman's claims to your title being properly ascertained." That Mr. Egerton is totally devoid of any thing like paternal affection towards Lord Delmont, is beyond a doubt; but I now insist upon his declaring, upon oath, whether he is, or is not, his son. Here is the correspondence between him and the Princess of Rosenwald."

"The whole is an abominable forgery!" cried the enraged, and now resolved to be revenged, Counsellor.—"The Princess of Rosenwald is capable of doing any thing to bring her favourite projects to bear. I did not

know, when she sent over her well-instructed messenger, that she also bore the title of Lindenfelt ; it was under that name I carried a suit for her into the Court of King's Bench. However I wish you joy, Lord Delmont, as Messalina was a paragon of virtue compared to the lady whose name you have accepted. She was privy to the assassination of her first husband, and when she is tired of you, she will probably have you dispatched in the same way : only if either she or you think to frighten me, why you are much mistaken. You are my son ; to my sorrow be it spoken, since you could so readily join in a plot to ruin my character, blast my fame, and destroy my reputation."

" Had a doubt of your consummate villainy remained upon my mind, Mr. Egerton," interrupted Lord St. Osyth, " your late confession would have completely removed it ; but more people are in your iniquitous secrets than you are aware of ; and your son has escaped both your's and the Princess's snares,

inares, who expired, but not his wife, soon after she publicly acknowledged your infamous collusion and intention to have seized your son's English estate and fortune. As a small recompence for all he had undergone, she left your son her Castle of Rosenwald, which he, with a disinterestedness that does him infinite honour, has returned to her heir, the Prince of Ermanstadt, who, with your friend O'Connor, were present while she endeavoured to make her peace with Heaven: and believe me, she died imprecating curses upon you, her most devoted friend. O'Connor, alias Rushvan, and the Prince, are forthcoming; therefore 'tis in vain to deny your connexion with the Princess, or your base attempts upon the injured youth, whom you would doubtless, were it in your power, deprive of his birthright. However, if you don't wish for a still more public exposure of your base designs, swear (we will easily procure you a Bible) that Montague Egerton O'Brien is your son; or instantly renounce all claims to the title of his father."

“ I join in the requisition, my Lord,” said the Earl of Altamont, “ though I, from this moment, swear never more to see, or hold converse with so base a wretch !”

“ And I swear by that God, who has protected my beloved Delmont, to bring the cause before the House of Peers !” exclaimed Lord Fitzarran, “ if that disgrace to human nature does not this moment take the oath prescribed,” presenting a large Bible he had been to fetch.

Had the earth opened before him, the Counsellor could not have looked more ghastly—every limb shook ; while another gentleman present, of his own profession, offered to administer the oath required, which, considering its import, he thought could not be too solemn.

Wiping his face, in a voice scarcely audible, the Counsellor said—“ I swear Montague Egerton O'Brien, Viscount and Baron Delmont, is the right and lawful heir to the
Altamont

Altamont and Fitzarran titles and estates, so help me, God!" And overcome by the violent internal struggle he had undergone, he sunk senseless upon the ground as he concluded.

Lord Delmont's agitation had not been much inferior, while he thought there was a doubt remaining respecting his relationship to Mr. Egerton; and with difficulty he suppressed a groan of internal anguish, when that gentleman thus solemnly swore he was the heir to those titles and estates he would have so willingly relinquished to have heard him as solemnly declare that he was the son of any other man; for acquainted as he now acknowledged himself to be with the Princess's private character, there was something absolutely revolting to human nature in having endeavoured to bring about an union between her and any of his children.

"Call some of the servants to assist you in removing the wretch I shall never more

style my son," said Lord Altamont, addressing the prostrate Counsellor's younger sons, "and see him conveyed home. I trust he will never more venture to disturb the family resident here by his presence."

Roused by this speech, Lord Delmont, who had retreated from the circle which surrounded the Counsellor, hastily advanced, observing that it was unmanly to insult even the greatest enemy in such a situation, and assisted his brothers to raise and bear the Counsellor to an adjoining apartment, where various remedies were administered to restore him to his senses. As soon as he opened his eyes, Lord Delmont returned to the company, after assuring his brothers he should ever consider them as such, and requesting to see them often in Park Lane, hinting that he should wish to hear how Mr. Egerton (whom, notwithstanding his late declaration, he could not call father) was; therefore hoped to see one or other of them the following day.

Lord

Lord Altamont could not find terms sufficiently strong to express his detestation of Mr. Egerton's conduct, who, he observed, dared not call Lord Delmont his son when he so solemnly asserted his rights to his and Lord Fitzarran's titles.

His attempt at revenge had greatly increased his crimes in the opinion of every one present, who vied with each other in endeavouring to raise the spirits of the master of the house; who, reflecting that he had long been acquainted with the Counsellor's baseness, consoled himself for having such a father, by the knowledge that he could no otherwise have been the grandson of a man he both loved and revered.

CHAP. VIII.

AS soon as the Counsellor was sufficiently recovered to recollect where he was, he hastily rose, exclaiming in a hurried accent, "Let me be gone from hence! Delmont's guardian genius has prevailed, and I am now completely entangled in his toils. The Princess too—but what was to be expected from such a woman? This infernal scheme was doubtless of her planning. Had he but married her, all had been well."

Charles Egerton had been little less shocked than Lord Delmont, when his father's abandoned conduct towards the latter had been published to their joint friends, and absolutely

absolutely shuddered at this farther proof of the baseness of his disposition.

William was gone to order the carriage to convey him home ; and during his absence, the Counsellor continued to vent his rage in execrations against the Princess, and the malignant star which presided at his birth, to whose influence he alone attributed the failure of his well-laid plans ; in short, he raved so vehemently and so incoherently, that Charles was sincerely rejoiced when his brother returned to inform them that the carriage was ready.

Mr. Egerton started up, and rushed down the stairs, and through the hall, with a rapidity which seemed to intimate that he was fearful his progress would be impeded ; and throwing himself into his coach, would have left his sons behind, if they had not jumped in after him, and ordered the servants home.

During their drive he maintained the most perfect silence ; and the moment he reached his own house, shut himself up in his study, giving strict orders not to be disturbed.

The astonished Mrs. Egerton had met them in the hall, not having expected them for some hours ; and the wild looks and hurried manner of her husband had increased her alarm.

That he was much better acquainted than he chose to acknowledge, with what had befallen Lord Delmont from the moment he was so strangely missing, she had long suspected ; and as his death would be of such singular advantage to her sons, she could not blame his conduct, particularly as he had frequently to her acknowledged the most inveterate hatred for the unsuspecting youth, whose friendship and regard he so sedulously courted, and who, he had frequently sworn, should never deprive her sons of those advantages they had been so long taught to expect. As
she

she had not unfrequently hinted to him her surprise at his having so immediately acknowledged the legitimacy of his birth, which Lord Fitzarran would, she thought, have found rather difficult to prove, he would reply— Could I by other means have preserved any degree of reputation, I should not have so easily acceded to the old fellow's wishes; but the Fates had decreed to favour that youth's pretensions, therefore who shall pretend to cope with supernatural agents? But I will yet endeavour to remove this favoured mortal. Could I have foreseen what has just happened, never would I have acknowledged our affinity; but, by binding him apprentice to some low mechanic, have effectually checked his ambition, and prevented the recent discovery."

These premises and hints had led Mrs. Egerton to suspect the kidnapping business had some reference to his former determination,

tion ; and she had in consequence, to the best of her abilities, seconded his scheme. She alone knew how bitterly he was disappointed when Montague escaped from that snare, and how he privately triumphed in the supposed success of his last plan, though not the most distant hint had ever escaped his lips, but now and then a significant smile, which implied exactly what his wife suspected ; who had not thought it politic to ask him any questions, that, in case his supposed scheme or plan should fail, she might safely plead ignorance of his proceedings.

His unexpected speedy return from Park Lane, and his looks, convinced her that something of a very disagreeable nature had occurred ; and her sons more than confirmed her conjecture, when they related what had passed at Delmont House. Far from excusing, she was now the first to condemn her guilty husband, declaring that she considered a separation from a man accused of such
flagrant

flagrant duplicity as a matter of necessity, except that she chose the world should suspect her of being privy to his iniquitous plans. Besides, who would employ him in his profession? He must be obliged to hide his guilty head in some obscure village in England, or, self-exiled, retire to the Continent; and she had no notion of punishing herself for other people's crimes.

His sons could not defend their father's conduct; and her daughter could only lament that she had given her such a parent, and that all intercourse would now be at an end between them and Lord Delmont, to whom she was particularly attached.

Meanwhile the Counsellor, in a state of mind bordering on despair, and nearly allied to frenzy, was pacing his study, unable to decide what line of conduct to pursue. His first idea was to retire to the Continent; but then would not that be tacitly acknowledging himself guilty of every crime laid to his charge

charge?—No, he would remain, and brave the storm.

He had acted very imprudently at Delmont House; he should have listened to his accusers in silence, and not have so hastily given way to the dictates of revenge; on the contrary, he ought to have endeavoured to work upon Lord Delmont's feelings. But it was now too late; he must therefore declare himself very ill-treated, and shun all future intercourse with that part of his family, though it would be necessary immediately to return the three thousand pounds he had so easily obtained from his generous son; and how to raise the money at so short a notice he could not divine. His rage for speculative gambling generally kept him very short of ready cash: indeed he had of late met with some very serious losses in his *Jewish* transactions; and had but a very few days before advanced a large sum in consideration of an immoderate premium, to a person in a great line of business, who was
upon

upon the eve of bankruptcy, and had not been a little chagrined upon discovering that the security he had received, and which he at the time had thought unexceptionable, was subject to many cavils, and was by no means adequate to his expectations :—so true it is that the greatest rogues belonging to that tribe, are sometimes outwitted by still greater and more knowing rascals.

In short, his greatest enemy would almost have been tempted to pity the miserable Egerton, who spent the night in revolving and rejecting plans for the future, unable to decide whether to brave or shun the consequences of his abominable treatment of Lord Delmont.

Towards morning he began to wonder that neither his wife nor children had broke in upon his retirement.—“ And can they, for whom I have doomed myself to bear the contempt of my former friends, and perhaps (nay assuredly) incurred everlasting perdition,
thus

thus desert me, when I stand most in need of consolation?"

Forgetting he had himself forbid them his presence, snatching up one of the expiring candles, he flung open his study door;—the lamp in the hall gave a feeble light, and no sound broke upon his ear. Conscience, it is said, renders all guilty people cowards—so faced it with Egerton; he paused, listened, then hastily retreating, endeavoured to re-animate his hitherto neglected fire. But unable any longer to bear his own reflections, he hastily and loudly rung his bell.

His eldest son, who had fallen into an uneasy doze in the adjoining parlour, obeyed his summons.

Unable to support his trembling limbs, the Counsellor had thrown himself into an arm-chair.

Charles

Charles Egerton, mistaking the cause of his agitation, tenderly requested him to retire. He made no opposition to his son's wishes, but suffered him to conduct him to his bed-chamber.

"Where is your mother?" he asked as they ascended the staircase.

"Retired with my sister, Sir."

"'Tis well; but don't you leave me, Charles—don't you follow the example of Lord Delmont."

"You really don't do my brother justice, Sir."

"Your brother! I charge you, as you would avoid my malediction, Charles, never again call the serpent I have fostered in my bosom, brother! For has not he, in conjunction with an abandoned woman, and a weak old man, planned and completed my ruin?"

"My duty towards you, Sir, shall never make me unjust to Delmont. I wish I could believe you innocent of every charge he brought against you."

"And

“ And supposing me guilty, degenerate, unnatural boy; who would have benefited by my crimes but you? But I never wished to injure Delmont. I was unacquainted with all the Princess's plans, and was as much the dupe of her fictitious tale of his death, as Lord Fitzarran and Lord St. Osyth pretended to be;—I will yet prove my innocence beyond a doubt.”

Charles made no reply to so improbable an assertion; and his father was too angry to permit him, notwithstanding his increasing aversion to solitude, to remain in his room, where, hastily throwing himself into bed, he endeavoured to forget the past and the future.

But he bore so powerful an antidote to repose in his own bosom, that he found it impossible to close his eyes: yet he remained in bed till a late hour, wishing to procrastinate even his meeting with his own family.

When

When he descended to the breakfast room, he found only his sons.

“Where is your mother?” was his first question.

“Gone to Bath, Sir,” replied Charles. “She desired me to give you this letter when you came down.”

Seizing the proffered billet, the Counsellor tore it open, and read as follows:—

“SIR,

“The recent public investigation of your conduct which has taken place at Delmont House, has displayed your real principles in so glaring a light, that it has become necessary, except I wished to be considered as your accomplice, that I should leave your house, and demand a legal separation from a man accused of having been guilty of the worst of crimes. I mean, in consequence, to set out for Bath to-morrow,

to-morrow, with my daughter ; and as I am determined to hold no farther intercourse with a person of your description, I shall empower a proper agent to treat with you respecting articles of separation. Till when, I remain, &c. &c.

“ LAURA EGERTON.”

“ So now, my ruin is complete !” cried the Counsellor, dashing the letter into the fire.—“ Which of you was so obliging as to repeat what passed at Delmont House to your ungrateful mother, who, I suppose, you strengthened in her prudent resolution, knowing her jointure is at her own disposal ?”

“ It was rather necessary, Sir,” replied Charles, “ to account in some respects to my mother for our unexpected return ; and I believe even you would have found it very difficult to have given a favourable turn to the occurrences of last night.”

“ ’Tis very well, Sir ; you will only please to remember that should I die without a will, every shilling of my fortune will devolve to the person you side with against your father. You may return to Oxford as soon as you chuse ; and you may rejoin your regiment, Lieutenant Egerton, whenever you think proper. In future I would wish you to consider your mother’s or Lord Delmont’s house as your home, for I shall very speedily break up housekeeping, and in some distant retirement endeavour to forget I ever was a husband or a father !” leaving the room, and ordering breakfast into his study.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

LORD DELMONT had neither retired sooner, nor rested much better than Mr. Egerton; still conscious integrity, and his sincere regard for Lord Fitzarran, rather reconciled him to the notion of being son to a man he now considered capable of any crimes.

His brother Officers had informed him that it was expected a reinforcement of the Guards would soon be sent abroad;—he therefore devoutly hoped that he should be ordered upon foreign service, as before his return (admitting he was so fortunate) Mr. Egerton's conduct towards him would be nearly forgot,

forgot, and he should neither excite the pity nor the wonder of their joint acquaintance.

Lord Fitzarran was only sorry that he had ever temporized with a man he so cordially despised and detested, while Lord St. Osyth sincerely regretted his near relationship to Lord Delmont.

From Charles Egerton the latter learned the recent occurrences in Lincoln's Inn Fields ; and as, notwithstanding their father's acknowledged villany, he thought his brothers had better not, like Mrs. Egerton, come to an open rupture with him, they, by his advice, left London that evening ; the one for Oxford, the other for Southampton, amply provided, thanks to his munificence, against any wants of a pecuniary nature, as he presumed the Counsellor would not be very generous at the present juncture. And as he found part of the regiment of Guards to which he belonged, was actually to

fail for Flanders in the course of a fortnight or three weeks, to save Mr. Egerton any further trouble respecting his funeral, &c. he thought it necessary to settle his affairs before he went abroad.

Lord Fitzarran's English steward, who now officiated in the same capacity for Lord Delmont, having received his instructions, soon completed his will, and was invested with ample powers to transact all his business during his absence.

Thus between military duty, conferences with Compton, and receiving the congratulations of all his friends upon his very unexpected return, not to mention appearing at St. James's, and paying various other necessary visits, his Lordship's time was fully occupied for upwards of three weeks.

Lord Altamont might be said to live in Park Lane, which indeed was the only place where he could escape being assailed with questions

questions respecting the late events in his family. Indeed he was so little either beloved or respected, most people were inclined to think that he was privy to the Counsellor's schemes, which no one scrupled to assert were planned for the sole view of compassing his eldest son's death, who, but for the very timely interposition of Lord Fitzarran, he had intended to deprive of his birthright. The more Lord Altamont, sensible he was (though certainly wrongfully) implicated in his son's guilt, endeavoured to convince his friends and acquaintance of his innocence, the less they were inclined to believe his assertions:—his known avarice leading them to suppose that he would connive at any villany by which he was likely to be a gainer. Finding himself, therefore, very coolly received in general, and by some totally neglected, his *health* soon rendered it necessary that he should breathe the pure air of the Highlands; and in consequence of his *physician's orders*, he left London, accompanied by his family, for Castle Innham, after taking a most affectionate leave

of Lord Delmont, and offering up a most fervent prayer for his speedy return.

Lord Fitzarran declared, when he was gone, that he began to feel something like pity for the old miser ; and to convince the world he did not consider him at all responsible for his son's villany, he would pay him a visit at his old mansion when the weather grew rather more congenial to its situation ; it would help to pass the time during his grandson's absence, whose wish (notwithstanding his love for him might almost be termed idolatry) to see a little foreign service, he greatly encouraged, observing that it was actual service alone which formed such Generals as Wolfe, Keith, and Laudohn ; and he trusted if he met with similar opportunities, his grandson would render the name of Delmont equally glorious : and no man ever ought to assume the insignia of a British Officer, except he was eager for opportunities to stand forward in defence of his King and country, whenever his services were required !

Lord

Lord Delmont, whose attachment to his profession might almost have been deemed enthusiasm, eagerly listened to the brave veteran, and longed to signalize himself in the field of glory !

Colonel O'Hallaran had taken upon himself, as most competent to the task, to provide him with a camp equipage, and advised him merely to take his valet, and a groom to look after a pair of saddle horses, which he would find absolutely necessary ; but more servants would rather prove troublesome than serviceable, and a great quantity of baggage would be scarcely less inconvenient during a march through an enemy's country.

Delmont perfectly coincided with his kind friend, and only wished he could have made his first campaign under his orders, as he was sensible the most invincible courage, unsupported by experience, more frequently led an Officer to death than to glory, though he was

by no means ignorant of the theory of the art of war.

He had, therefore, now only to endeavour to put his knowledge into practice, Colonel O'Hallaran was telling him one evening; when Mr. Compton made his appearance with some writings that he wished the young Peer to examine and sign before he left England, excusing himself for not having brought them sooner, owing to his having a suit of the utmost importance coming on in the Court of King's Bench the next day.

Henry Melcombe had dropped in a little before the Attorney, and now asked—"Are you engaged then in the famous cause Lloyd against Lloyd, Mr. Compton?"

"Yes, Sir, I am solicitor for the plaintiff, and scarcely doubt our succeeding in proving his legitimacy, though three of the first Counsellors in England are engaged for the defendant."

"At

“At all events,” rejoined Lord Fitzarran, “I suppose you have no doubt of being paid; and then I dare say ’tis a matter of indifference to you whether your client or his opponent gains the day.”

“Your Lordship, I am convinced, entertains a better opinion of my principles, though I have often heard you say that you are not partial to my profession; but upon my word, and I am not conscious of ever having forfeited it, I never undertake a cause except I think my client has reason on his side. But in the present cause I think we have not only reason, but equity and justice on our side, not to mention law. My client was sent at a very early age from India for his education; he came consigned to the care of his father’s brother; his father died while he was upon his voyage, in consequence of which event, his uncle placed him, under another name, at a private school in Yorkshire, and seized upon the fortune he had inherited:—suffice it to say, about two years ago, something came to light

respecting this nefarious transaction, which has induced a friend of the deceased Mr. Lloyd to support the cause of the orphan; and I have no doubt but the defendant will be compelled to relinquish the fortune he still withholds from his injured nephew. I have had the opinion of the first lawyers in England upon the subject; as the villany of the uncle has rendered a case, which otherwise would have laid in a nut-shell, very intricate: and they are unanimously of opinion we shall succeed, though Mr. Egerton is leading Counsel against us."

"I must read these deeds over in another room," observed Lord Delmont, rising, "else I shall scarcely know their import, and fancy they belong to Lloyd against Lloyd," retiring as he concluded.

"I know what made you run away, young gentleman," exclaimed Lord Fitzarran; "'tis a noble fellow, Compton; he was only averse to hearing any of my animadversions upon his honourable father, and he knows I
can't

can't hear even his name with common patience."

"Good God! I protest I did not reflect," said Compton.

"Why you had forgot you were talking of an eloquent rogue in his son's presence. I begin to have a good opinion of your client, since Egerton is on the contrary side."

"I wonder how he dared accept a brief," said Colonel O'Hallaran, "or rather how he dares appear in public."

"He must have a tolerable share of assurance," observed Melcombe.

"I should like of all things to hear him hold forth," rejoined the Earl.—"Could I mix among the spectators without being noticed, Compton?"

"There are seats from whence your Lordship may hear and see all that passes, without being observed by the Court, if you don't place yourself in a front row."

"Then I am resolved I will see how the Counsellor acquits himself. Will you accompany

recounting several anecdotes respecting the battle of Minden, in which he had taken an active part.

CHAP. X.

LORD DELMONT was punctual to his morning appointment with Lord St. Osyth, who had sent to inform him that, owing to bad health, one of his brother Officers, of the rank of Major, had wished to dispose of his commission, previous to the corps, to which he belonged, leaving England; and as he had desired to have the earliest intelligence should any such resignations take place, he had, in consequence of several senior Captains declining the offer, made the purchase in his name, with the full approbation of the superior Officers, and every one else concerned in the business; therefore he chose to be the first to congratulate him upon his promotion.

Delmont fully appreciated the kind motive which influenced his behaviour ; and it was agreed that he should kiss hands, &c. at the next levee, when he was also to take leave, in consequence of his approaching departure. His promotion rendering it necessary that he should pay several visits, shew himself at the War Office, &c. he returned home to impart the news to his grandfather, and dress for the former purpose, and was rather astonished when he learned that Lord Fitzarran and Colonel O'Hallaran had also breakfasted out ; and as they were not returned, when he went out the second time, he left a line to inform them that he should dine at Whitehall, and to request, if they had formed no other engagement since he had seen them, they would join him there, having some very agreeable intelligence to communicate, which he did not chuse to commit to paper.

We will now leave him to pay these devoirs established by etiquette, while we return to
Lord

Lord Fitzarran, who easily prevailed upon Colonel O'Hallaran to accompany him upon his intended expedition.

Henry Melcombe joined them, as had been agreed, at the King's Arms in Palace Yard, where they breakfasted, and then proceeded to the Hall, where, by means of a bribe, they easily obtained seats to their mind, from whence they could see without being seen, several other gentlemen being seated before them.

The Court was very much crowded, but it was some time before the Peer could distinguish the person he had come purposely to hear; but the Court no sooner resounded with "Loyde against Loyde," than he saw him and several of his brethren take the places allotted for them.

His Lordship's old friend E—— opened the cause with that warmth and animation he ever displays

displays in behalf of oppressed innocence ; and a profound silence prevailed while he was interesting every heart in favour of his client.

Several witnesses were then called and examined, before Counsellor Egerton rose to endeavour to turn the scale in favour of the oppressor.

Notwithstanding he had taken every likely method to raise his spirits before he came into Court, he was evidently very much agitated ; indeed the eyes of the whole assembly were upon him, as the generality of them were personally acquainted with him ; and the recent events in his family had been too publicly canvassed, not to render him an object of great curiosity.

He had given three or four hems to clear his utterance, when the gentleman who sat before Lord Fitzarran, was called out of the box ; and the Counsellor, happening to glance his

his eyes that way, caught sight of his Lordship at the very moment he was beginning to speak. His countenance varied, he bit his lips, and appeared, if possible, more shocked than when his son presented himself to his astonished view at Delmont House.

The Earl, neither wishing to be known nor remarked, was hurt to find the eyes of every one present following the bent of the Counsellor's, which remained fixed upon him with a sort of malignant stare, till he received a hint to proceed to business.

Hemming once more, and turning over his brief sheet by sheet, evidently without knowing what he was about, he at last began to assure his Lordship and the Jury that he could confute every word his learned friend had advanced in favour of the young impostor, who had, at the instigation of some malicious people, the secret enemies of his client, instituted this suit.

As he proceeded, his embarrassment wore off; he became rather more intelligible, and a gleam of his former eloquence at times broke forth: still he stammered and hesitated so frequently, that a sort of confused murmur of disapprobation frequently made him pause, and wipe his face before he could proceed.

Expecting every moment to see him throw down his brief, and run out of Court, Lord Fitzarran wished that he had not given way to his curiosity.

Still, though with evident difficulty, the Counsellor proceeded to expatiate upon the wrongs of his client, which were unfortunately so similar to those he laboured under himself, that the task of detailing them became every moment more difficult.

At last, in pursuance of his brief, as the Court supposed, he stamped his foot, vehemently exclaiming—"I tell you, Gentlemen of the Jury, he is dead, and this is an impostor;

postor ; and if he did not die in Germany, he may in Flanders, for all that old fellow ; and then who will dare to dispute my claim to his fortune and estates ?—What if my client's brother did send a child from India, what of that ?—I say he is my son ; have not I sworn to that ?”

A mouse might have been detected, had it attempted to cross the Hall during Mr. Egerton's incoherent pleading, such profound silence prevailed. But, as if conscious he had said something wrong, he made a full pause, and turning once more to his brief, proceeded very rationally for about ten minutes, when turning to the Judge—

“ You may say that this child is my son, my Lord, but I will prove that he is not mine, for all that old Lord, whose daughter he says I married. I knew he was not dead when I prepared to bury him ; and I will maintain the truth in every Court in Europe. Can there be a clearer case than the one before

before the Court? I say that he is my son, and I am his heir. I don't want to prove him a bastard, because I have two sons besides. She swore he should die; but you argue he is not dead, and that the plaintiff in this suit is Griffiths Loyde, the son of Governor Loyde. Who told him so? Not me—I never mentioned India."

"By Jafus! he has lost his senses, Henry!" whispered the horror-struck Lord Fitzarran. "Get him out of the Court, my good lad, if possible."

Melcombe hastened out of the box, while the Judge, scarcely knowing what to do, called out—"Counsellor Egerton, I wish you would attend more to your brief; we are at a loss to understand your meaning."

The bewildered Egerton stopped, put his hand to his forehead, then hastily turning to his brief, entered once more into the cause.

"It

“ It is necessary to prove that this Griffiths Loyde is the very identical child, who left Bengal in the Warren Hastings East India-man: upon that sole point the cause rests; and I swear he is not that child. Now what can you say? His father thinks him dead, and would he were so! for I repeat it, Gentlemen of the Jury, he is not my son by my present wife; and what more did I ever say? The Princess of Rosenwald is dead; you can't bring her forward. But I repeat my words, he is neither my son, nor that old fellow's grandson, for I married his daughter.”

The Judge, sensible the Counsellor was now absolutely rambling, would fain have put a stop to his pleading; but before Melcombe could get near enough to interfere, he ran on till he absolutely foamed at the mouth, first vehemently asserting that Montague Egerton was his son, next as vehemently contradicting what he had the moment before advanced; then reverting to his wife, who, he said, had abandoned

abandoned him, till several gentlemen, at the request of Henry, endeavoured to lead him out.

He made a blow at the first who laid hold of his arm, swearing that he would plead till he had gained his cause, for his client never meant to injure the plaintiff.

“ You have convinced the Jury,” said the second Counsel engaged on the same side ; “ they are about to give a verdict in our favour ; but Mr. Loyde wishes to see you.”

With infinite difficulty he was prevailed upon to quit the Hall, after having rather excited the indignation than the compassion of the audience, notwithstanding the nature of his malady.

Fearful of increasing his ravings should he come in sight, Melcombe requested two of the gentlemen, who had assisted in leading him out

out of Court, would accompany him home, promising to be there to receive him.

The Earl and Colonel, who had left their places when the Counsellor was led away, also kept aloof; but having seen him seated in Meleombe's coach, they called a hack, which they ordered into Lincoln's Inn Fields, discouraging all the way upon this sudden derangement of the Counsellor's faculties.

As they drove very fast, they had time to prepare his household for his reception, and to send for Dr. M——.

He was tolerably quiet by the time he reached home, though he had continued to ramble much as he did in Court, they were informed. In a short time Dr. M—— arrived and found his patient exceedingly agitated, privately hinting that he had seldom seen stronger symptoms of insanity in any person so suddenly seized; yet he hoped something might be done, though he was fearful many things

things preyed upon Mr. Egerton's mind, that would render his cure tedious, if not impossible.

Lord Fitzarran acknowledged that he was more hurt than astonished at the derangement of his faculties, but wished every possible means to be tried for his restoration. As for keeping his unhappy malady a secret, that he feared, considering where he was seized, would be impossible; however, there was no need to make any additional bustle, and his disorder might as well be termed a brain-fever, let it terminate how it would. Two men of the Doctor's were therefore sent for, and he underwent a copious bleeding, blistering, &c. but was so very averse to these necessary measures, that a straight waistcoat became requisite before the Earl, Colonel, and Henry left the house; who, hardly knowing how to break the news to Lord Delmont, proceeded first to Whitehall to consult Lord St. Osyth, who
had

had long been the Earl's, and was now become the Colonel's oracle. From him they learned Lord Delmont's promotion; and he advised Mr. Egerton's strange seizure being made very lightly of to his son-in-law, whose spirits might be otherwise very much depressed by what he considered rather as a blessing; as should the Counsellor's mental derangement be absolutely confirmed, it would effectually prevent him from planning any further iniquitous schemes.

Lord Fitzarran agreed that it was perhaps a stroke of Providence in favour of his grandson; who soon joined the party, and learned, with serious regret, a sort of frenzy fever had seized his worthless father, while endeavouring to brave the universal contempt in which he was beheld.

Lord St. Osyth agreed that it was a serious blessing for such a man to be deprived of reflection.

Lord

Lord Fitzarran considered his illness in the same light ; and as they all observed, to grieve for a man who had, according to his own confession, deserved the rack, would argue weakness rather than humanity.

Lord Delmont strove to bear this fresh affliction as it became a man, though he sincerely rejoiced that the time for his leaving England was now fixed ; and only hoped that he should either immortalize that name his father had so indelibly disgraced, or find an honourable grave in the field of glory.

An express was sent to Bath to inform Mrs. Egerton of her husband's situation ; but she declined taking the management of him or his affairs into her hands. Delmont therefore sent for Charles Egerton ; and as they were both averse to the miserable Counsellor's being removed from his own house, it was agreed between them that he should remain there under the care of proper attendants.

Compton

Compton, conjointly with his head clerk, was empowered to examine his papers and books, and was ordered to submit the result of their investigations to young Egerton.

His private bureau and some drawers, where it was presumed he kept letters and papers he would not wish to have undergo so public a scrutiny, were sealed by both brothers, and the keys delivered to the eldest, till such time as it was seen whether there was any chance of the Counsellor's recovering his senses: nor were any of the household discharged, through motives of similar delicacy, but were merely submitted to the direction of Compton, who was empowered to pay and receive; and, in short, to act according to the exigence of the moment, and as the interest of the younger branches of the family required.

Having finally settled all these melancholy arrangements, and taken leave of his best friend and numerous acquaintance, Lord

Delmont embarked for the Continent, with that part of his regiment which had hitherto remained in England; and arrived without meeting with any occurrence worthy of remark, safe at the Head Quarters before Valenciennes.

Those of his brother Officers who were already with the army, were rejoiced very much to see him. They had before learned his return to England, and the subsequent events in his family; therefore warmly congratulated him upon his restoration to their corps.

They then entered into a general detail of the various occurrences that had taken place since they landed in Holland; and he was happy in the reflection that he was come to share their laurels. Though he had been several years in the Army, he had never yet been in a camp, nor seen actual service.

The spring was far advanced before
he

he took up his habitation in a tent ; and could not help reflecting that, while he was repining at his hard fate when immured within the walls of Rosenwald, many of his brother Officers were exposed to real hardships of every kind, and had frequently been obliged to stretch their weary limbs upon their mother earth, while he had been doomed to sleep in a bed, absolutely relaxing to his well-braced sinews, from its warmth and softness : he therefore thought, upon the whole, that he, of all men, ought least to repine at the dispensations of Providence.

The baseness of his miserable father's conduct had rather raised than sunk him in the general esteem ; and in other respects Fortune had showered down her choicest blessings on his head.

In consequence of these reflections, he endeavoured to shake off the despondency which had hung about him from the moment

the Counsellor had sworn that he was his son, and entered with real spirit and ardour upon his military duty, and into the general plan of the campaign, conforming in every respect to the way of living that the other Officers belonging to his regiment had adopted, merely endeavouring to outvie them in his strict attention to his duty and to his men, whose situation he strove to render as comfortable as circumstances would permit, certain it was both politic and right to gain their affection, as, without their firm and willing support, no Officer could hope to attain celebrity.

CHAP. XI.

A FEW days after Lord Delmont set sail for Flanders, his uncle, Lord Irnham, who had long been expected in England, landed at Falmouth, in total ignorance of every thing that had occurred in his family during the last eighteen months, as his brother and Colonel O'Hallaran, with whom alone he corresponded, had ceased writing, from supposing that he would have left Calcutta before their letters reached it: and though Lord Altamont had expressed his sorrow when Lady Irnham and her infant son perished in the deep, and had desired Mr. Egerton to assure his brother that he freely forgave him, he had never confirmed this

generous pardon in any separate letter to his son:—and as he had little hopes of benefiting either himself or family by courting Lord Irnham's friendship, he silenced his conscience and his friends, by observing that it was the latter's place to sue for a reconciliation; he had long forgiven him, but could not think of entering into correspondence with him, till he expressed a wish for such a mark of his favour;—and as the Counsellor thought it was more to his interest to keep them upon distant terms, he rather widened than closed the subsisting breach, which, situated as his brother was, was no very difficult task; and he had paid his own court so successfully, that Lord Irnham, not finding himself inclined to make a second choice, had resolved to make his children his heirs.

Colonel O'Hallaran had been too little acquainted with Mr. Egerton before, in conjunction with Lord Fitzarran, he had forced him to restore his eldest son to his rights, even to mention him in his letters to his friend; and
had

had he not expected him in England, he would scarcely have known how to have informed him of his brother's baseness towards his first wife and her offspring. It may also be supposed that Mr. Egerton felt still more unwilling to address his brother upon the subject; though, having been in constant expectation of his return, he had formed a very plausible story to extenuate that part of his behaviour, which he was certain would not meet his approbation, except his injured son corroborated his assertions. But his late derangement had completely incapacitated him from attempting to defend himself, had the recent events left him any room to hope that he could have done it with success.

In consequence of the very pressing invitation that he had received, to take up his abode in Lincoln's Inn Fields whenever he returned, till he could suit himself with a house to his mind, thither Lord Innham ordered the postillions that drove him from Hounslow.

He had merely brought a couple of servants with him ; one of whom he had in the chaise, and the other he had left to come round in the ship with his heavy baggage.

It was between two and three when he stopped at his brother's door, anticipating the cordial fraternal reception the Counsellor's letters had taught him to expect, and wondering whether he should remember Mr. Egerton's person ;—he was astonished upon perceiving most of the front window-shutters were closed, but instantly concluded the family were in the country : yet he thought it was too early in the year for a man of such eminence in his profession to be out of town.

A servant in the Altamont livery presented himself, to whom the now impatient Lord Irnham called out—"Is Mr. Egerton at home?"

The

The sight of a postchaise and four, and a strange gentleman, rather surprised the servant, who, slowly approaching the carriage, obliged his Lordship to repeat his question, before he, with some hesitation and increasing astonishment, answered in the affirmative.

“Then open the door, and shew me to him; never mind his being engaged—I know he will excuse my intrusion.”

“My master is not very well, Sir,” replied the man; “I don’t think you will be permitted to see him. If you are come upon business, Mr. Compton is in the study.”

“What, is Mr. Egerton dangerously ill?”

The man shook his head.

“Well, do let me see the person who is in the study.”

The servant made no objection, but led the way in silence to that room, where sat Compton and the Counsellor's clerk docketing and examining deeds, &c.

"A gentleman out of the country, to my master upon business," said the servant, as he entered the room.

"Pray be seated, Sir," said Compton. "I presume you have heard of Mr. Egerton's unfortunate mental derangement; but if you have any deeds or papers in his hands, you may depend upon their being delivered up as soon as possible."

Lord Irnham was hardly more shocked when he learned the news of his wife's shipwreck; as, from not being intimately acquainted with his brother, he had long felt the most sincere fraternal affection for him.

Compton, perceiving his emotion, which he in vain endeavoured to remove, presumed that he was a friend of Mr. Egerton's, and
was

was sorry he had been so abrupt in his communications.

Having recovered rather more composure, Lord Irnham asked how long Mr. Egerton had laboured under this unhappy malady.

“ Not more than a fortnight, Sir.”

“ And to what cause is his derangement attributed ?”

“ Respect for his family, Sir, prevents me from giving you my private opinion upon so delicate a matter.”

“ Can I see him ?”

“ Not without the concurrence of his relations, Sir; besides Dr. M—— has particularly ordered him to be kept quiet; none but his keepers are ever permitted to enter his room.

“ Where is Mrs. Egerton and her sons ?”

“ Mrs. and Miss Egerton are at Bath, Sir; Lord Delmont accompanied his regiment abroad last week; Mr. Charles

Egerton is at Oxford; and Captain Egerton is at Southampton."

Lord Irnham had heard of his brother's natural son, whom he had indeed promised to provide for, but the Counsellor had altered, as he grew up, his first intention of sending him to India; but was totally unable to comprehend who Compton meant when he mentioned Lord Delmont, therefore enquired what relation he was to Mr. Egerton.

Compton stared at what he considered so very extraordinary a question from a friend of the Counsellor's; while he replied—"His Lordship is Mr. Egerton's eldest son, Sir. But if you wish to be made acquainted with any other particulars respecting the family, or have any desire to see Mr. Egerton, you must apply either to the Earl of Fitzarran, who resides at Delmont House in Park Lane, or to Lord St. Osyth, who, I suppose I need not tell you, resides at Whitehall. The Earl of Altamont is at Castle Irnham; but
it

it would be highly improper on many accounts to apply to him upon this occasion."

More than ever puzzled and perplexed, his Lordship considered whether he should make himself known to Compton, as there appeared to be some mystery attached to his brother's illness, which he grew more and more impatient to fathom: but at last he resolved to suspend his curiosity till he had taken some time for reflection. He therefore returned to his chaise, which he ordered into Pall Mall, devoutly wishing he had remained in India, since he could no longer hope to enjoy either pleasure or satisfaction from the conversation of his brother, and almost dreading to enquire what had occasioned the derangement of his mind.

Having easily procured an apartment at the Royal Hotel, and given orders for his dinner to be ready by five o'clock, he made a trifling alteration in his dress, and then strolled out into St. James's Street, where he entered

entered one of the coffee-houses, particularly appropriated to the military in general; and the Guards upon duty at the Palace, where he had frequently lounged away an hour in former times, though he entertained no idea of meeting with any body he had ever known; but he hoped to fall into discourse with some one, from whom he should be able to learn something respecting the Lord Delmont Compton had mentioned, and who, according to his account, was certainly in the Army: besides he wished to know in what part of England his old friend O'Hallaran was.

With this design he took his seat in a box, and having called for something, began to turn over a newspaper. He had scarcely glanced his eyes over the first column of the paper he held, before two gentlemen, one in the Guards, and apparently upon duty, took their seats opposite him, who immediately began to enquire whether any of the homeward-bound Indiamen were really arrived in the Channel.

Lord

Lord Irnham mentioned those which had reached the Land's End ; adding, " I came over passenger in the ———, and have not been more than an hour in London."

" I am very happy to hear that so many of the Company's ships are safe," replied the Officer. " We were fearful that you might have fallen in with the enemy, which, unprepared as you certainly were to act upon the defensive, would have been rather unpleasant, as our troops are not yet masters of France, though a considerable reinforcement sailed only last week to accelerate that desirable event."

" News is daily expected of the surrender of Valenciennes, so Lord St. Osyth told me this morning," said the other. " He rejoices that Delmont will be a sharer in the glory of the triumph, and I am almost tempted, much as I like him, to envy him the laurels he will gain ; for if the French motto is, '*La liberté en la mort !*' I am sure his will be '*Victory or death !*'—But have you heard how his precious father is ? Rot me if I shall ever forget
the

the figure he cut the evening Delmont popped upon us all so unexpectedly. Old Skin-flint has hid his head in the Highlands; they say he was to have had Lenham to his share."

"Upon my soul, you wrong the old man," replied his companion. "Lord St. Osyth assured me this very morning he was convinced he was as little acquainted with the Barrister's nefarious schemes, as either Lord Fitzarran or himself was; nay, but yesterday I heard Colonel O'Hallaran declare the very same."

"I beg pardon for the interruption, Sir," said Lord Innham, "but pray can you inform me where Colonel O'Hallaran resides in town?"

"At Delmont House in Park Lane, Sir," was the reply, "with his brother-in-law, the Earl of Fitzarran, who is grandfather to the young Nobleman to whom the house properly belongs."

"And a fine old Trojan the Earl is," cried the Officer, "a soldier to his back-bone: his grandson inherits all his spirit: damme! if

if I think a drop of Egerton's blood circulates in Delmont's veins : he is an O'Brien every inch of him."

Lord Irnham was more and more perplexed and bewildered. Colonel O'Hallaran had wrote to him several times since his accession to his relation's fortune, and had also informed him that his brother-in-law, General O'Brien, had succeeded to the Fitzarran title and estates ; but how that Nobleman came to be connected with the Lord Delmont, who he understood was his brother's son, he could not conceive.

"Colonel O'Hallaran was saying but yesterday," rejoined the Officer's companion, "that Delmont takes much more after his uncle, Lord Irnham, than any other part of the Altamont family, and report speaks in the highest terms of that Nobleman ; therefore when the present old miser has starved himself to death, the title will be supported with some spirit."

As

As it grew late, and without putting questions, which might betray the interest he took in the affairs of the Altamont family, his Lordship did not foresee his curiosity would be gratified, he returned to his hotel, resolved to wait upon Colonel O'Hallaran as soon as he had dined, from whom he hoped to obtain every information he could desire; and though personally unacquainted with Lord Fitzarran, he was no stranger to his many excellent qualities, as the Colonel had frequently, in his letters, entertained him with some of the whimsical, but generous traits in his disposition.

Had Lord Altamont been in town, he would, notwithstanding the distant terms they were upon, have applied to him in preference; as he was conscious the brother, whom he had been so anxious to see, with whom he had corresponded in the most unreserved manner for the last twenty years, and whom he expected to find at the head of his profession, had, by some means or other, forfeited the

the public esteem ; there was, therefore, something humiliating in applying even to his next best friend for information upon such a subject : but as it was become unavoidable, between seven and eight he set out on foot for Park Lane.

The first person he asked, directed him to Delmont House.

“ And can this superb mansion belong to my brother’s son ? ” he thought, as he crossed the Court—“ I never understood Charles was very rich.”

During his mental soliloquy, he knocked at the door.—“ Does Colonel O’Hallaran reside here at present ? ” was his question, to a porter in a livery that he was unacquainted with.

“ He does, Sir.”

“ Then be so obliging as to give him that card ; and tell him the gentleman from whom you received it, wishes to see him if he is disengaged.”

The

The man bowed ; and, opening the library door, requested that he would walk in, while he sent the card into the eating parlour.

Lord Innham did as he desired, astonished at the air of opulence and magnificence which appeared to prevail in Delmont House ; but had scarcely time to look round him, before Colonel O'Hallaran hastened into the room, crying—"Welcome, a thousand times welcome, to old England, my dear friend !"

"You are very good, O'Hallaran ; but though I have not been more than eight hours in London, I have more than once wished myself back at Calcutta."

"What, you have been into Lincoln's Inn Fields ?"

"I have. I want you to answer me a thousand questions respecting my unfortunate brother."

"I will give you every information in my power ; but you must first allow me to introduce

introduce you to Lord Fitzarran, who is almost as nearly related to Mr. Egerton as yourself, as that gentleman's first wife was his daughter; and to Lord St. Osyth, who stands in the same degree of relationship to Lord Delmont, who is Lord Fitzarran's grandson, your brother's eldest son, and your nephew: they are impatiently waiting for my return, as I told them whose card had been put into my hand."

"The mystery seems to thicken," replied Lord Irnham, "as I never before knew that my brother had been twice married; however, the gentlemen you wish me to join, appear, according to your statement, to be so much a part of the family, that I can have no objection to your proposal."

Lord Fitzarran looked and declared himself particularly happy to see his dear boy's uncle; nor did Lord St. Osyth appear less pleased: and he was even more than polite to a man whom report had long since taught him to esteem.

The

The company being seated, Lord Irnham, conscious that no one but himself could lead to the subject, requested, with a frankness peculiar to his disposition, to be informed of various particulars respecting his brother and family, with which he was at present totally unacquainted; mentioning the reception he had met with in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and the few hints he had picked up in St. James's Street, which had led him to fear that his brother had deviated from the paths of honour.

"By Jafus!" cried Lord Fitzarran, "'tis very hard that men of real honour should ever have to blush for those of their connections, who don't even know the meaning of the word; and this I often repeat to my dear Delmont. But do, my good Lord St. Olyth, satisfy Lord Irnham's curiosity; you will do it much better than I shall, and the shorter you make your story, the better I shall be pleased; for since the Counsellor has been visited by so dreadful a malady, the less
his

his misdeeds are expiated upon, the better : but let us first welcome his Lordship in bumpers."

This being done, Lord St. Osyth, with his usual feeling and delicacy, related his son-in-law's history, from the time Lord Fitzarran obliged the Counsellor to acknowledge his legitimacy, bringing it down to his recent departure from England, and concluded by bestowing many deserved eulogiums upon the hero of his tale.

Lord Irnham listened to his very concise statement of facts in silent astonishment, protesting, when Lord St. Osyth ceased speaking, that it appeared as incredible as it was unnatural, that a father should act such a part towards so amiable a son; yet he saw no reason to doubt their consanguinity, and wished he had arrived in London rather sooner, that he might have had the pleasure of seeing Lord Delmont, as he was very strongly tempted to return to India by the next fleet,
where

where he should be more likely to forget his near relationship to Counsellor Egerton.

“Come, come, young gentleman,” cried Lord Fitzarran, “for young you are to me, don’t set your face against old England, because your brother is unworthy your regard. You will be, ere long, called upon to maintain her dignity and laws:—a British Peer ought not to forsake his station to gratify his own feelings. What blame or dishonour can attach to either you or my grandson through your brother’s conduct? who, admitting he has rather tarnished the name of Egerton, is more calculated to remove the stain than yourself, Lord Irnham. My grandson will look up to you as an example; and if you, in a fit of misanthropy, because every individual in your family is not immaculate, abandon your country and connections, he will, with far greater justice (as there are people who may suppose that he bears some resemblance to his father) bury himself in Germany or America, and plead your conduct in
extenuation

extenuation of his folly. You must not think of leaving England again ; and I must insist upon your taking up your abode here for the present. I am only the representative of your nephew, and I know he would wish that you would consider yourself perfectly at home here, at Lenham, and at Delmont."

Colonel O'Hallaran and Lord St. Osyth so warmly seconded the Earl, that Lord Irnham was prevailed upon to send for his valet and baggage ; and before morning, had almost forgot he was related to a miser and a villain.

During the course of the following day he thought it would be but proper to let Lord Altamont know that he was in London, not chusing to visit the Highlands without an invitation.

Lord Fitzarran was convinced he need not fear receiving one by return of post ; nay he rather thought the Earl would bring it in

person, and promised to accompany him into Scotland whenever he took that journey.

Henry Melcombe was making the tour of England, by way of passing the time during his best friend's absence; therefore few visitors broke in upon the family party at Delmont House.

The second evening Lord Irnham expressed a wish to see his miserable brother, who he could not help thinking had still something upon his mind; and yet no probable doubts could arise respecting his relationship to Lord Delmont, though he now as frequently declared he was not, as that he was his son;—it was therefore evident he either wished to contradict or to enforce his late assertions; but to pretend to draw any conclusions from what he said, all the gentlemen agreed would be displaying little less than insanity.

To

To satisfy Lord Irnham, Colonel O'Hallaran accompanied him into Lincoln's Inn Fields next morning, having previously made their intentions known to Dr. M—— who met them there, and assured them he began to hope his patient's malady would yield to the force of medicine. The keepers said he had passed a very tolerable night; the Doctor therefore led the gentlemen into the Counsellor's dressing-room, where he was quietly seated, and seemed to take very little notice when they entered.

Lord Irnham asked him how he did.

He surveyed him very minutely for some time, but did not chuse to speak.

Dr. M—— felt his pulse, and then told him his brother from Calcutta was expected in England; he presumed that he would be happy to see him.

“No!” he vehemently exclaimed; “I know what he wants; but he is not here, and I will never tell him. Where is Delmont? He is my son, and I am his heir.”

He then talked about France, and declared his intention of going there, till, upon a sign from the physician, the gentlemen silently withdrew, perfectly satisfied that no dependance could be placed upon any thing he said, though there evidently still was a something respecting Lord Delmont he either could not or would not explain.

The Doctor soon followed them, observing he had heard Mr. Egerton talk much more rationally than he had done that morning; he therefore presumed he had some faint recollection of his brother, which had rather increased his malady.

CHAP. XII.

LORD ALTAMONT was so excellent a financier, that he never received a hint of any new taxes being levied, without immediately entering into some plan or scheme to render them less burthenfome to himself.

The country was now engaged in an expensive war—the Minister would therefore soon want money ; and it was the place of every prudent man to be provided against every exigency. In consequence of this reasoning, he had ordered the greater part of his park to be broke up immediately on his arrival in Scotland, conceiving this would be turning it to greater advantage than even

grazing it with either cattle or sheep—deer he had never kept ; and was in the very act of abusing his labourers, who he maintained were the most idle people in North-Britain, when he was presented with Lord Irnham's letter. Conscious he had already been severely censured for his neglect of a son, who was an honour both to his family and country, and certain he might gain, and could not lose by courting his friendship, as he had long understood his Lordship was richer than himself, he resolved to answer his letter in person, as the best means of silencing those who he knew would be busy with his character just at the present juncture ; besides, Lord Irnham having taken up his abode at Delmont House, rendered such a step absolutely necessary.

The Countess and her daughters were exactly of the same opinion, and hoped he would not return without Lord Irnham, who they hinted might as well be flattered into disposing of his fortune in favour of his sisters, instead

instead of dividing it among his nephews and nieces.

This the Earl flattered himself would be no very difficult task, as the only serious rival they had to fear was Lord Delmont, who was much too amply provided for to covet his uncle's wealth. The younger Egertons were of that class of non-descripts by no means likely to become great favourites with a man of Lord Irnham's judgment and discernment; besides, they would certainly come in for something considerable at their father's death, or upon his insanity being confirmed; as the Earl knew that, by some means or other, the Counsellor had realized a very large fortune.

The next thing, therefore, his Lordship considered, was to reach London as expeditiously, and at as little expence as possible: he should take up his abode at Delmont House upon his arrival, therefore it would be needless to encumber himself with servants,

whom he considered as real torments when travelling, and he certainly should not stop more than a couple of days in town: he therefore gave orders to have a change of linen and a pair of stockings put into his great coat pocket; and early the following morning he set out on horseback alone, meaning to ride the first forty miles across the country, to a small village, where he knew the stage he meant to proceed in; changed horses about six o'clock in the afternoon.

He frequently left home in this strange manner; nor were his servants ever informed where he was going, or when he would return; and he was so little either respected or beloved among his household, that they heartily rejoiced whenever he released them from the fatigue of waiting upon a person they all secretly despised.

The illustrious traveller reached — without meeting with any perverse accident, such as being recognized, &c. He alighted
at

at a small alehouse, where he had sometimes seen the London coach standing, near the entrance of the village, declaring his intention of getting into the stage, which he was informed would arrive in half an hour, and that it changed horses at their house.

Whenever his Lordship went upon any of these secret expeditions, he made it a point to dress in character; both his hat and great coat were, therefore, rather the worse for wear, and over his cambric neck-handkerchief he had tied a coloured silk cravat, which he kept for this purpose.

He told the landlord, as he was merely going to London upon business, he should leave his horse at his house till he returned; hinting that he did not wish him to have much corn, as he was apt to be very wanton after a long holiday, but wished, in other respects, he might be taken great care of.

The man promised every thing he desired; and his Lordship entering the house, called for a pint of ale, and some bread and cheese, and had scarcely finished his frugal meal before the coach arrived:—unfortunately it was at present full within side; but as they were to drop one of the passengers at the next town, about fifteen miles farther, he was informed that he might from thence be accommodated with a place all the way to London, if he could make shift to ride without side for this stage.

As he understood he should only pay accordingly, which would be a saving of half-a-crown, he agreed to mount the roof in compliance with the coachman's advice: there were already four outside passengers, three of whom had taken possession of the front of the coach, and the other rode upon the box, where Lord Altamont wished to have made the third; but the coachman objected, because the stage was rough and hilly, and he wanted the use of his arms.

His

His Lordship, knowing the man had an act of Parliament in his favour, could not pretend to dispute the point; therefore merely hinting he would have been no loser, had he permitted him to ride where he wished, he condescended to place himself with his back to the horses, after paying fourpence for his meal, telling the landlord that he should most probably sleep at his house when he returned, which, he thought, would induce him to take greater care of his horse.

The evening was closing in apace when Earl set off; but he muffled himself up, and endeavoured to make himself as comfortable as circumstances would admit, though he looked forward to his expected change of situation with anticipated satisfaction.

The evening being very cold, and having no one to converse with, which would have served to beguile the time, the distance to — appeared much greater than it had been represented, and he was almost sorry he had not

hired a horse, which would have been a far more agreeable mode of travelling than the one he had adopted.

It was quite dark when they reached the town where he was to descend from his elevated situation. The passengers were to sup, and the coach was to be changed, for which reason they drove into the inn-yard, under a long narrow gateway. As he turned in, the coachman called out—"Take care of your heads; though I don't believe you are in much danger, yet very tall people may chance to be hurt if they are not upon their guard."

After giving this caution, he dashed forward; and having stopped, and the company from within and without being alighted, upon looking round, he called out—"Why, where is my other passenger?"

The other outsides declared they had seen him only a few minutes before they stopped.

"Oh

“ Oh ho ! what I suppose he has given me the slip : well as he has left a d—d good horse at —, why it matters not. I will be a match for him ; yet he did not want to go on to London, I fancy.”

This became the general opinion. The passengers walked into the house, and had just sat down to supper, when the coachman, who seemed not a little alarmed, came in.

“ I have found my other passenger, ladies and gentlemen, where I certainly little expected to have met with him ; for in going to take the luggage out of the basket, behold he laid uppermost, with his face downwards. I am sure I hardly know whether he is dead or alive : his face is very much cut, owing to his having fallen against the corner of a square box. Will you be so obliging as to step out and see what can be done ; he has been brought into the next room.”

They readily complied with the man's request, desiring that a surgeon might be sent for immediately.

His Lordship gave very little signs of life, notwithstanding various means were used to restore him to his senses.

How came he to meet with such an accident ? was next debated ; and it was supposed that, owing to his being very tall, and not having attended to what the coachman said, he had received a blow upon the back part of his head, which had sent him forwards into the basket.

The surgeon confirmed these conjectures, pointing out the bruise which he supposed had stunned him ; but assured the bystanders that he entertained no fears of his recovery, proceeding, without delay, to open a vein.

Every one present was anxious to know
whol

who he was ; his having left a horse at —— was a proof that there would be enough to bury him ; besides, upon unbuttoning his great coat, they perceived he was very well dressed, and a handsome gold watch, which was handed round, led them to suppose he was a man of property.

“ There can be no harm in feeling in his pockets before all this good company,” said the landlord ; “ we may find where his friends live ; if he is not far from home, they ought to be sent to.

The first thing that came to hand in his coat pocket, was the identical letter which had made him set out upon this unfortunate journey. The direction—“ To the Right Honourable the Earl of Altamont, Castle Irnham, &c. &c.” occasioned no small degree of astonishment among the spectators ; and as neither his Lordship’s name, person, nor private character were at all known to any one present, the surgeon, landlord, landlady, waiter,

waiter, and chambermaid, presuming that he certainly was a Lord, redoubled their exertions to restore him to life.

The medical practitioner thought it necessary to read the letter aloud. It was evidently from a son of his Lordship's, he observed, though great part of the contents was perfectly unintelligible to the party assembled; but it confirmed them in the opinion they began to entertain of the wounded man's rank.

Lord Irnham's epistle was carefully replaced. The best bed was instantly prepared; the patient was undressed, and put into it; and as every article of his dress corroborated their suspicions, and the landlady had discovered a coronet over an A. upon his neck-handkerchief, she declared her intention of sitting up with his Lordship, though, like every one else, she wondered that so great a man should have thought of ascending the roof of a stage-coach.

The

The passengers, finding he did not recover, returned to their supper, all agreeing they little thought they had come from — in such grand company.

As there was no chance of the great man's being able to pursue his journey, the stage went forward to London at the accustomed time, leaving his Lordship to reap the fruits of his abominable parsimony; whose stupor yielding to the powerful stimulatives which the surgeon found it necessary to employ, he opened his eyes, and looked round him with wonder and amaze, which was infinitely increased upon being addressed by his title by the surgeon. Excessively mortified to find himself known, conscious how ill his outward appearance agreed with his rank, and how very despicable his mode of travelling must have made him appear, he severely condemned himself, first for having undertaken the journey, and secondly, still more so, for having attempted to perform it in such a manner,

manner. Without, however, noticing the surgeon's respectful address, he complained very much of his head. The practitioner had prepared something to alleviate the pain, which he now applied; his Lordship was therefore soon able to converse with those about him, and vowed he would make an example of the fellow who had so wantonly endangered his life.

The landlord gave him to understand, that though they were very much shocked his Lordship had met with such an accident, the passengers had one and all exculpated the coachman from any blame, as he had called out in time. His Lordship not having attended to what he had said, could only be attributed to his being unaccustomed to be so warned of any dangers.

The Peer, therefore, found even his rank would procure him no redress; had he been inclined to put his threats in execution, which
was

was not exactly the case. He had received a very deep cut near the corner of his right eye, another across his nose, and several bruises of a slighter nature, besides the one at the back of his head, which was by far the most painful; yet he asked the surgeon if he thought he should be well enough by morning to set out upon his return home. Very unwilling to lose such a patient, the practitioner assured him that it would be the height of imprudence even to think of leaving his bed the next day; and he could not be answerable for the consequences, if his Lordship did not submit to a temporary confinement.

The landlord offered to send an express to Castle Irnham.

His Lordship was by no means inclined to alarm Lady Altamont, he replied; he trusted he should be able to travel in a few days. She would neither expect to hear from him or see him before. But how came they to discover his rank?

The

The landlord acknowledged the truth, and his reasons for feeling in his pockets.

His Lordship could not blame him, though he by no means approved of what he had done; therefore, by way of explaining what had induced him to travel in so strange a manner, he said that business of importance had obliged him to cross the country, where the roads were too rough for a carriage, and his haste to be in London had unfortunately tempted him to venture his life by ascending the roof of a stage-coach.

No one asked him any further questions; though his behaviour and the orders he gave during four days he was confined at the inn, led them to guess his true reason for travelling in a style so unbecoming his rank.

The second day after his accident, he wrote a very long letter to Lord Irnham, replete with paternal affection, and wishes to see him in Scotland, assuring him he should have given

given him the meeting in London, but for an accident which had prevented him from prosecuting his journey, and confined him for the present at —, from whence he dated his letter, though he hoped to be able to return to Castle Innham within the week. Of the unfortunate Egerton he said but little, except that he had rendered himself totally undeserving either of their pity or regard; he therefore endeavoured, as much as possible, to banish him from his mind, and to console himself with the certainty that Lord Delmont had inherited none of his vices, but was as generally and deservedly esteemed as his wretched father was, generally and equally deservedly despised. It may be presumed that neither Lord Fitzarran nor Colonel O'Hallaran were forgotten; indeed they were both requested to accompany Lord Innham into Scotland: nor did his Lordship fail to observe that he had never felt so interested in the success of the British arms, as since his grandson had entered upon actual service.

Having

Having dispatched this conciliatory epistle, the Earl submitted with a tolerable good grace to two days' more confinement; at the expiration of which he ordered a post-chaise to convey him to the village where he had left his horse, having first, with infinite reluctance, paid the bill of the house, which he deemed absolutely exorbitant; and having given the surgeon, (who had attended him three times a day, and who had presumed he would not think five guineas too much, considering the many visits he had paid him), three, observing two would have been more than a London surgeon would have dared to ask; but he believed he had fallen into the hands of extortioners.

He was not able to reach home the same day he left —, nor could he, now his rank was known, sleep at the hedge alehouse where he had left his horse; he therefore, notwithstanding the bandages which still enveloped his head, rode ten miles further, to a house where he was certain he was unknown, and where.

where he gave way to his prevalent passion, without fear of incurring any censure ; and proceeded the next day to Castle Innham, to relate the woeful mishaps which had befallen him, and to fret about the money he was out of pocket, and the bruises he had received, which the servants were told were occasioned by a fall from his horse ; and the same story was to be repeated to Lord Innham, should he, as the family hoped, come down into Scotland. We will, therefore, leave them making preparations for his reception, while we return to the hero of our tale.

CHAP. XIII.

DURING the siege which preceded the surrender of Valenciennes, Lord Delmont was engaged in several skirmishes, but in no action of sufficient importance to allow him to distinguish himself either by his skill or bravery.

The Sir Peter Reresby, whom he had rather unexpectedly met in the Isle of Wight, had, during his detention at Rosenwald, from a fear that the regiment, to which he belonged, would be sent abroad, purchased into the Guards, which, to his infinite surprise and very great chagrin, were the first troops ordered upon foreign service; and had he endeavoured

endeavoured to make a second exchange, his real motive must have been discovered. He had, therefore, been compelled, with as good a grace as he could assume, to accompany them abroad; and it may be supposed he was not a little eager to renew his acquaintance with a man, now so every way his superior as Lord Delmont.

The town having surrendered to the combined forces, and a proper garrison having been established, the main body of the British Army marched towards Quesnoy; and a lesser detachment, comprising what was called the flower of the troops, among which was the regiment in which Lord Delmont held a command, was dispatched to summon the small town of B—— to follow the example of Valenciennes.

This small army soon reached the place of their destination, and summoned the garrison, in due form, to surrender; which they as peremptorily refused, with various

fanfaronades peculiar to their nation. The British General, therefore, gave orders to storm the citadel, and bombard the town.

Three several attempts were made by the assailants, who were as many times repulsed with no inconsiderable slaughter. The General therefore thought it necessary to call a council of war.

Lord Delmont was among those who voted for their making one more attempt; and, with infinite deference to his superiors in rank and skill, pointed out where he thought they were most likely to succeed.

The General declared himself of the same opinion, and it was unanimously resolved to make another general attack; and Lord Delmont received orders to lead his men towards the vulnerable part in the ramparts he had remarked and so accurately described; as the General, wishing to pay his court to Lord St. Osyth, was anxious to place his
son-

son-in-law in the road to glory ; nor could he have appointed any one more desirous of planting the British flag upon an enemy's walls, as he resolved either to succeed or perish in the attempt.

The scaling ladders were, therefore, once more raised by his orders, while a powerful diversion was made on the opposite side to facilitate a measure some of the Officers condemned as very rash ; and having, in a short and appropriate speech, endeavoured to animate his men, who all swore to support him to the last drop of their blood, he desired them to follow him, boldly mounting the ladder which was most exposed to the enemy's fire, and was so ably seconded by both Officers and men, that he dislodged the French from the battery which particularly annoyed the assailant army, and turning their cannon upon themselves, soon compelled them to surrender at discretion, though not without having received two wounds from a broad-sword, but

of which he was scarcely sensible during the heat of the action.

The brave example he set his brother Officers had the desired effect. A very short contest decided the business; and in less than an hour the citadel surrendered, and the gates were opened for the victorious army.

Both Officers and soldiers had been informed there was one of the strictest female Convents within this town, that had ever been founded in France, and which was supposed to contain, within its walls, some of the most beautiful women in the kingdom, their order being too poor to excite the cupidity of the reigning rulers, and the Nuns too secluded and inoffensive to have given any offence to the *peuple souverain*. They had been suffered to retain possession of their Monastery, and to remain unmolested, notwithstanding so many of the sisterhood had been driven from
similar

similar peaceable asylums, merely to humour a licentious mob.

This Nunnery was situated near that part of the ramparts where Lord Delmont had forced the garrison first to retreat, and finally to lay down their arms, and appeared to have suffered very little from the bombardment which had taken place, or the heavy cannonade that had been kept up by way of covering and seconding the assailants.

But both town and citadel having surrendered, and the British being completely masters, some of the soldiers, who were under but little subjection in such a moment of triumph, swore they would go and liberate the handsome Nuns, and empty their cellars.

The resolution was no sooner formed than they hastened to the ponderous gates, at which they loudly knocked.

Lord Delmont, apprized of their intention, and fearful they would commit some outrages which might debase the national character in the opinion of their enemies, joined their party, solely with a view of protecting the defenceless and terrified women he supposed were immured within the walls.

The gates were immediately thrown open by two or three old lay-sisters, who assured the men that almost all the Nuns had left the Convent and the town upon the approach of the British.

Regardless of what they very imperfectly understood, the soldiers rushed forward, some running up stairs in search of the pretty girls, others making for the cellars. Finding it in vain to attempt to impede their designs, his Lordship followed those who went in search of the Nuns, repeatedly entreating they would respect any ladies that they might discover, as, should any still remain in the Convent, they must be friends to their cause.

They

They promised to obey his injunctions; but having entered a long passage, with which all the cells communicated, they flew first into one, then into another, but as they found none of those they were in search of, they swore the birds were all flown.

His Lordship entertaining the same opinion, and beginning to feel very serious inconvenience from the wounds he had received, was returning towards the stairs, when his progress was arrested by a female scream which proceeded from one of the farthest cells. In spite of the faintness which began to steal over him, he flew back again, and into the room to which continued screams for mercy directed him, and perceived two Nuns upon their knees before three of his own soldiers, who were attempting to raise them.

“Wretches!” he exclaimed, “what is it you mean? Is it thus you obey my commands? Begone this instant, nor dare any longer to insult these defenceless females

with your presence; and as you value my future favour, endeavour to prevent the excesses of your companions. Should any more ladies be found, see that they are conducted hither." He then presented his hand to the youngest of those before him, and assured her he would protect her from any farther insults, while his men protested they meant no harm; one of them had only asked that handsome girl for a kiss, and the others had sworn that it was a d—d shame to make Nuns of such charming wenches.

They then, in conformity to his Lordship's orders, left the room, while he assisted one of the most beautiful creatures he thought he had ever beheld, to rise, but who trembled so excessively, that she was unable to stand without support.

Her companion, though little less terrified, was able to recover her feet, and wished to have expressed her thanks to their kind protector; but the moment she raised her eyes
upon

upon him for that purpose, she started back as if they had encountered a spectre, so much did his Lordship remind her of a former friend, who was always present to her imagination. Indignation had, in spite of fatigue and loss of blood, tinged his cheeks with a very deep glow, and his dark eyes were expressive of the feelings of his heart; she felt a momentary temptation to embrace this fine young man, and bless him for having so opportunely stepped forward in their defence; checking, however, the sort of involuntary impulse of her gratitude, she approached her companion, and addressing her as her dear child, entreated she would calm her spirits, as she was sure this gentleman (upon whom she continued to gaze with increasing pleasure and surprise) would protect them from any further danger.

“With my life, ladies!” he warmly exclaimed, astonished to hear himself addressed in very good English. “I presume you are my countrywomen, and this perfectly

accounts for my having found you here," continuing to hold the hand of the younger, whom, like his soldiers, he thought ought not to have been devoted to a life of seclusion. Her dress perhaps increased her charms ; it seemed so emblematical of the purity of her mind, though it was merely a robe of grey serge, and a black veil of Italian gauze, which fell back in graceful folds over her fine turned shoulders, and came sufficiently low upon her forehead to add to the expression of her truly lovely face, without concealing a profusion of auburn hair, that would, had he been better acquainted with the regulations of Convents, have convinced him she was not yet professed. He was too much taken up with this elegant recluse even to notice her companion, and was reflecting where he could place them in security for the present, when a faint sickness, which he found it impossible to shake off, obliged him to let go the young Nun, and catch hold of the back of a chair for support.

The

The beautiful girl, whose terror had given way to a far more pleasing sensation, perceiving that he was now in more need of support than herself, anxiously caught hold of his arm to prevent him from falling ; but as instantaneously let go her hold, and started back, every feature expressive of her horror and surprise, not having perceived, owing to the colour of his coat, the blood which had, and continued to flow from a wound which he had received in the back part of his left arm, and another in the same shoulder, till she felt his sleeve, and perceived it upon her own hands.

He would have spoken when he saw what had occasioned the young Nun's alarm, but found it impossible to articulate a word, and must have come with all his weight upon the floor, if the elderly lady had not contrived to break his fall, while, regardless of her own safety, and urged by her fears for this handsome young Officer, the younger flew out of the room screaming for assistance, and soon drew some of the very soldiers who had

so much terrified her not a minute before, to know the occasion of this fresh outcry. She could only point to the apparently lifeless Delmont, near whom the other Nun was kneeling. Not an Officer in the regiment was more, if so much, and deservedly, beloved by the men; and as they took it for granted he was dead, and perceived the younger female's hands were literally bathed in blood, they instantly accused her of having murdered him.

The mother pointed to the wounds he had received, explaining how she presumed he must have met with them; desiring that he might be raised, and laid upon one of the beds (there were two small ones in the room), and she would endeavour to stanch the blood, while they went in quest of a surgeon.

Her orders were complied with; though they were both assured that they should be considered as prisoners till their Officer's wounds had been examined; and woe be

to them, if they had any hand in his death!

To attempt to enter upon their defence to such prejudiced judges, the mother thought would be very absurd; she therefore merely requested they would fetch a surgeon. One was dispatched upon this errand, while the other two stood to watch the prisoners.

The youngest applied volatiles to the nose and temples of their deliverer, while her mother endeavoured to bind up his arm and shoulder. He soon recovered his senses, and faintly articulated his thanks. He would have risen, but was earnestly entreated to lay still, till some assistance could be procured, the ladies lamenting they had neither wine nor cordials of any kind to offer him; for having remained in the Convent contrary to the wishes of the late inhabitants, they had been left without even the means of subsistence.

Meanwhile,

Meanwhile, the soldier, who had been dispatched for a surgeon, flew to communicate the news of Lord Delmont's death to the General, averring that he had been assassinated by two Nuns in the great Convent near the ramparts.

Notwithstanding the Commander had still many orders to give, and a hundred things to regulate, he desired the soldier to conduct him instantly to the Nunnery, taking one of his Aids-de-Camps with him, and leaving orders for his own particular surgeon to follow without delay ; he then dispatched a messenger in search of Lord Delmont's servants and baggage, which were still without the town with the rear guard, observing to his companion as they walked along, he would soon be at the bottom of this iniquitous business, and vowing he would shew no mercy if he found any reason to suspect Lord Delmont had fallen a victim to the treachery of either sex, as it would be doubly unfortunate, after owing their victory, in a great measure, to his
skill

skill and bravery, to lose him in such a manner.

Upon reaching the Convent, he was, however, soon convinced that he had been strangely misinformed, as Lord Delmont, though very languid, was conversing with the two Nuns, who were using every means in their power to save, instead of to destroy him. Having expressed his joy to find him so much better than he expected, and assured him that his own surgeon would be with him in a few minutes, the General enquired what had become of the rest of the Community.

“ They left this house and the town, Sir,” answered the eldest of those with Lord Delmont, “ the day before yesterday, upon hearing the British were advancing, fearful it would, as it has done, fall into their hands.”

“ And pray, ladies, how came you to remain behind them ?”

“ Because

“ Because we have been confined here many years much against our will, Sir; and expected to meet with friends among those they considered as enemies.”

“ Then I trust you will not be disappointed in the hopes you have so justly formed. You can have no objection, since there must be plenty of spare room, to our transforming your habitation into a sort of hospital. I shall trust to your gratitude for securing the best accommodations it affords, for my young friend, whom I shall place under your care, Ma'am, till the surgeon pronounces him well enough to resume his command.”

“ We will, with pleasure, do every thing in our power to accelerate this gentleman's recovery, Sir. But I must inform you our cellars and larder are both empty.”

“ Then it shall be my care to replenish them,” replied the General.

The appearance of the surgeon induced the ladies to retire into an adjoining cell. He pronounced his Lordship's wounds by no means

means dangerous, though he was sorry he had lost so much blood; but while he was preparing the necessary dressing, he wished his patient could be accommodated with a better bed and a larger room, as the one the soldiers had laid him upon was very small, and had no curtains.

The General conveyed the intimation to the Nuns, who advised his Lordship's being removed into the Abbess's quarter, as it was called, whither they led the General; and as that lady had not been able to carry away the furniture, he found, notwithstanding the reputed poverty of the Convent, his young friend would have no reason to complain of his lodgings; and as, before he was in bed, his valet and baggage arrived, as soon as he had laid down, he sent to request the ladies would come and preside at his tea-table.

The General, before he left the Convent, advised their moving into one of the better rooms nearer their patient, as he meant

meant to devote the cells to the wounded soldiers.

They made no objection to his proposal, nor did they decline Lord Delmont's invitation, the mother observing that tea was a luxury she had not enjoyed for the last twenty years; but as the surgeon wished his Lordship to remain very quiet, and as they also stood in need of repose, after establishing one of the lay-sisters as an assistant to his valet, they retired to their new apartment, very grateful they had obtained so powerful a protector (as Lord Delmont's baggage and camp equipage were convincing proofs of his rank and opulence); for whose speedy recovery they offered up the most fervent prayers, and from whose company and conversation they expected to derive the greatest satisfaction.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

THE greater part of the army left the town the following day ; the detachment of the Guards which Lord Delmont commanded, and part of another regiment remaining as its garrison.

The General visited his Lordship before he left the place, and found him attended by the two Nuns, who seldom, for any length of time, left his bedside, and took all their meals in his apartment.

The elder of the two appeared about forty, and was still a very fine woman. She always addressed the young one as her daughter, who,

who, in return, called her mother ; but as, though they were both very handsome, they bore no sort of resemblance to each other, the General presumed they merely made use of these endearing appellations from the elder lady's having long had the care of the other, perhaps during her noviciate, which, owing to the Revolution, he presumed she had not completed.

As his Lordship neither was, nor at all likely to be in any danger, he would not hear of the General's surgeon remaining at B—— upon his account, as he had a very high opinion of the one attached to his regiment; observing, if he had skill enough to cure the soldier, he would, no doubt, be able to set him upon his feet again, who had two such skilful nurses, and every luxury his situation could require. The Commander, therefore, took his leave of him, with many kind wishes for the speedy re-establishment of his health, and privately hinted to the Nuns that his young friend was a man of the first rank and fortune,
and

and had relations who would not fail to express their gratitude to every one who contributed to his cure.

For the first three days his surgeon would not allow him to leave his bed, except to have it made. His agreeable female companions, however, rendered his confinement far from irksome.

No other Officer of distinction had suffered materially in the action; and those belonging to the garrison paid him frequent visits, at which times the Nuns confined themselves to their own apartment. His male friends were, therefore, frequently refused admittance, under pretence of his being asleep, or the surgeon having ordered him to be kept quiet, as he enjoyed the company of his amiable nurses much more than that of his companions.

The mother seemed a woman of very superior understanding, and of a most engaging disposition,

disposition, while the young Eliza appeared to join a degree of *naïveté* he had never seen equalled, to uncommon parts, and a vivacity that scarcely knew any bounds, and which her recent emancipation from a state of absolute slavery had of course greatly increased; and she could now laugh at the terror she had experienced when the gallant soldier had solicited a kiss, protesting her fears for her own safety had soon yielded to her apprehensions for his Lordship's life; observing, if the English had borne rather more resemblance to the present French soldiers, she should most likely have been guillotined for having murdered their Commander, before he had sufficiently recovered his senses to assert her innocence.

In a few days more his Lordship was able to walk about his room, and even permitted to take the air in the extensive garden belonging to the Monastery, into which his apartment opened; and no one could arrange the scarf, in which he wore his arm, so well as

Eliza,

Eliza, who was sure to have it to alter if either the surgeon or his valet had taken the greatest pains to please him. By way of varying the scene, he now frequently dined in the ladies' apartment, where he remarked a variety of well-finished drawings, and some elegant fancy works, the productions of Eliza's genius he was informed. His Lordship bestowed some very just encomiums upon all he saw.

“ My daughter has finished many pieces far superior to any we have in our possession, my Lord ; but they were sold for the benefit of the house ; and to this we were obliged to consent, or we should not have been provided with materials to cultivate such agreeable amusements. I have been my Eliza's sole instructress, and she now far excels her mistress.”

“ You were professed, I presume, Ma'am ? ”

“ No, indeed, my Lord ; we were absolute prisoners, but neither Nuns nor Catholics.”

“ You

“ You astonish me beyond measure, Ma’am.”

“ Mine is a long and melancholy story, my Lord. Before we part I may endeavour to interest you in our behalf; we require a generous and a powerful friend.”

“ Without presuming to believe I deserve either of these appellations, if you will only point out to me how I can best promote your interest and future welfare, you may depend upon my zeal.”

“ Your Lordship’s countenance taught me to expect just such a reply; but it grows late; you must retire, or we shall infringe upon, instead of seconding your surgeon’s orders; so a good repose; to-morrow you may be able to sit up rather longer.”

What his Lordship had heard, puzzled him excessively. He began to think they were mother and daughter; and that the beautiful Eliza, who had made a deeper impression upon his heart than he wished to acknowledge, even to himself, was the fruit of
some

withdrew, followed by her daughter, promising to return in a few minutes.

“ Now why could not Eliza have remained with me ?” thought Lord Delmont, as he turned over the drawings. “ Was the mother afraid to trust us *tête-à-tête* ? Surely I have given her no reason to doubt my principles ; or did she think the contents of this *port-feuille* would afford me more pleasure than her daughter’s conversation ?”

Various views of the monastery, taken, he presumed, from the gardens, displayed infinite genius ; and several portraits, in crayons, of Nuns, and one Friar, were, he doubted not, excellent likenesses ; at last he took up a rough sketch of a head in chalk, which astonished him beyond measure, as he could not help fancying, improbable as it appeared, that it bore some faint resemblance to his wretched father. He viewed it in various lights.

"Where could these women have ever
M 2 seen

seen him?" he mentally ejaculated; "but how absurd to fancy they ever even thought of him. This was probably the production of their imagination, and chance had given it the resemblance he thought it bore the Counsellor. He still held it in his hand when the ladies returned, and could not help instantly enquiring whether the sketch was the work of imagination."

"No, really, my Lord; I intended it to represent the features of one of the greatest villains upon earth, if he is still in existence. That was done soon after I was immured within these walls, from mere recollection. Early in life I succeeded pretty well in that line of drawing; and that wretch's figure is ever present to my mind's eye."

His Lordship felt his colour vary. The character she had bestowed upon the original of her design, bore still more resemblance to his father. With some hesitation he observed

observed—"These were features which circumstances indelibly impressed upon the memory."

"True, my Lord; those I have endeavoured to sketch in the very next drawing, which, perhaps, you have not yet examined, are of that number. But my feeble pencil could not do justice to one of the finest countenances I ever beheld, your Lordship's excepted."

Delmont's cheeks glowed from various reasons, while he examined the design she alluded to.

"Can you trace any family likeness between these two sketches, my Lord?"

His confusion abated as he again turned to the first, convinced that it was not, as he began to suspect, done for Mr. Egerton.

"I can't say I perceive any resemblance, Ma'am. The last appears the most highly finished."

“ Yet it is by far the worst of the two, my Lord.”

At that moment his valet brought him a letter from the General, to inform him that the troops, under his command, had met with so serious a repulse the day before, he believed they should fall back either to Valenciennes or B—— in the course of a day or two.

He communicated this unpleasant intelligence to his companions, observing that such was the fortune of war ; and he thought it not unlikely that the Commander in Chief might think it expedient to withdraw the garrison now in the town, as their dividing the Army in an enemy's country frequently laid the smaller detachments open to ambuscades and other inconveniences, which were often attended with the most serious consequences.

Eliza burst into tears, crying—“ Oh mama ! what will become of us, if——”

“ My

"My dear child," interrupted the mother, "is this a time to give way to despondency, while we are under the protection of our countrymen? His Lordship, perhaps, will be so obliging as to procure us passports before he leaves B——, to return to England; and surely some of my family are still living, in which case we shall need no further assistance."

"At present, ladies," replied Lord Delmont, "I consider you as particularly under my protection. Should any unforeseen occurrence oblige us to move from hence sooner than I expect, we shall go with the army; and I shall not quit you, as I am not yet able to resume my command:—but if you are particularly anxious to return to England, I will make your wishes known to the General, who, I am convinced, will provide you with passports, &c. and my servant shall attend you to any part of Great Britain you may wish to visit; or I will give you letters to my grandfather, one of the best men of the

age, who will, I am sure, render you every service in his power."

"I feel it impossible to express the gratitude your Lordship's considerate benevolent proposals are so calculated to inspire. From the situation in which you have found us, and from what I have already said, you must suppose there is something very extraordinary in my history; and, I dare say, were I to recite it under false names, you would think it scarcely within the bounds of probability; for the present, I can only request you would suspend your judgment. I am perfectly conscious that appearances are against me."

"I am only anxious to learn how I can best forward your future schemes, Ma'am," interrupted Lord Delmont (rather hurt at what he considered a very unnecessary reserve); "my age does not entitle me to your confidence."

"Your kind condescension, my Lord, entitles you to both that and my gratitude. I merely wish for a short time to withhold the former; once in England, I shall be a better

better judge of many circumstances I am at present totally unacquainted with. Your acquaintance among the British Nobility is probably very extensive; but are you in habits of intimacy with any branch of the Altamont family, or can you inform me what sort of a man the present Earl of that name is, or how old he is?"

Exceedingly astonished, his Lordship hastily answered—"He is between sixty and seventy, Ma'am.—Are you at all connected with him or any of his family?"

His surprise was noticed by both mother and daughter. The former, after a short pause, without answering his last question, asked—"Pray what family has his Lordship?"

"Two sons and two daughters, Ma'am, by different wives, and" (his colour rising while he spoke) "I am the eldest son of the Honourable Charles Egerton."

"Can it be!" exclaimed the mother, her countenance expressing both horror and indignation. Hastily rising, she abruptly, and

without apologizing, left the room, and was followed by her daughter, who seemed to participate in her unpleasant sensations."

Lord Delmont was hurt and astonished beyond measure, and had half a mind to pursue them, and to force them to come to some explanation.

"They certainly have some reason to complain of Mr. Egerton," thought he. "He is evidently the original of the picture; and, like many more, they seem to have transferred the hatred they perhaps justly bear the father, to his unoffending children. Deceived by my title, they are now shocked that they have rendered any services to a son of Mr. Egerton's; yet, except towards me, I never heard his conduct impeached; and these women have been confined within these walls twenty years; therefore it is very extraordinary. Perhaps Lord Altamont has been the occasion of their imprisonment. Would to Heaven!" he mentally ejaculated,

"I

“ I derived my origin from any other family, for eternally shall I be condemned to blush for both my father and grandfather !”

The ladies did not appear again till tea. Eliza had evidently been in tears, and he had seldom felt himself less at his ease, though his wounded pride prevented him from asking any questions that might lead them to give a reason for their late behaviour.

The mother, he fancied, seemed to look down upon him. Her injustice, admitting she had the most serious reasons to complain of his father, cancelled, in his opinion, all her former attention towards him ; and he soon convinced her that he could be more cool, more haughty, and even more reserved than herself.

As soon as tea was over, he rose.—He said he had some letters to write, therefore should wish the ladies a good evening, as he expected some of his brother Officers to sup with him.

While he was speaking, the knot which held the scarf, in which he wore his arm, gave way. The jerk it occasioned made him change colour. Eliza's feelings seemed in unison with his own.

"Suffer me to replace it," she hastily cried, advancing for that purpose, as he was disengaging it with his other hand.

"There is no necessity for your giving yourself so much trouble, Ma'am; my servant is doubtless in my own room."

Eliza was obliged to turn to the window to conceal her emotion. His Lordship felt very angry with himself, yet he had fallen into the very failing he had been condemning in another; but was leaving the room, when the mother begged he would permit her to assist him. He made no objections, not wishing to appear capricious, though he was sincerely angry with her, and only rather piqued with Eliza.

"Does

“ Does your father know where your Lordship now is ?” she ventured, with some hesitation, to enquire.

“ Mr. Egerton and myself are not in habits of correspondence, Ma’am,” anxious, though he scarcely knew why, to convince her his father and himself did not possess congenial minds ; but unwilling to give her any further satisfaction, slightly bowing, he retired to his own room, and passed the most restless night he had done since his confinement, ruminating upon the strange conduct of his countrywomen. He had purposely asked some of his brother Officers to breakfast with him, therefore did not see the ladies till dinner ; when he met them with a degree of chilling reserve, perfectly calculated to banish the mirth and sociableness which had hitherto prevailed among them ; and thus did a week, the longest he had experienced since his confinement, pass away.

A part of the British troops was, at this time, encamped about fifteen miles further up
the

the country ; and as the General thought their position at once strong and advantageous, B—— was considered as perfectly secure, and its small garrison were permitted to sleep in peace.

This Lord Delmont slightly mentioned to his companions, who, no longer appearing anxious to return to England, he presumed that they had altered their intentions, or were averse to receiving any further favours from Mr. Egerton's son.

CHAP. XV.

DURING the interval which elapsed between Lord Irnham's writing to his father, and receiving his answer, he grew rather more reconciled to his native country, and very impatient to see a nephew, of whom he daily heard such favourable accounts; therefore frequently wished he could obtain a command in the Army now in Flanders.

Lord St. Osyth, conscious he should particularly oblige, and perhaps essentially serve his son-in-law, exerted his utmost interest, unknown to Lord Irnham, to gratify his wishes; who, upon receipt of Lord Altamont's very conciliatory

tory letter, prepared, accompanied by Lord Fitzarran, to set out for Scotland.

Colonel O'Hallaran chose to remain in London, promising to dispatch every letter which came from Lord Delmont express to the good old Peer.

Nothing worthy of remark occurred to the travellers till they reached —, where Lord Altamont was taken out of the basket of the stage-coach, and where they took up their quarters for the night, meaning to reach the Castle by dinner the following day.

The servants were soon made acquainted with the accident that had befallen the Earl, which afforded them infinite diversion, and which Lord Fitzarran's valet amused his master with while undressing him, who swore it was no more than the old miser richly deserved; and could not help repeating what he had learned, to his companion the next morning, who declared, mean as he had long known

known his father to be, he could scarcely have believed he would have mounted the roof of a stage-coach, and only hoped this misfortune would disgust him from ever repeating the experiment.

No parent could have given a son a more paternal welcome than Lord Altamont did Lord Irnham. The Countess was scarcely less pleased to see him; and his sisters had long wished to be introduced to him, remarking how strong a resemblance he bore to their favourite nephew, Lord Delmont, and appealing to Lord Fitzarran to confirm the truth of their observation; which he did very readily, adding the resemblance was not limited to their persons, as he thought their dispositions and pursuits were still more analogous. Lord Altamont was of the same opinion; and then began to account for the bandage he still wore over his left eye, attributing the hurt it concealed to a cut he had received by a fall from his horse.

Lord

Lord Fitzarran begged to know whether he met with this misfortune before or after he was knocked from the roof of the Edinburgh stage into the basket?—This was a stroke his Lordship could not parry ; he was therefore forced to confirm the account they had already heard, and to bear with patience and apparent good-humour the severe sarcasms of the Irish Peer, upon his abominable avarice.

In the course of the following day, the father and son being *tête-à-tête*, Lord Irnham mentioned his unfortunate brother, whom the Earl represented as far more criminal than Lord St. Osyth had made him appear, as he did not scruple to affirm that he had certainly planned the destruction of Lord Delmont.

“ Do you entertain any doubts of their relationship ?” asked Lord Irnham.

“ None,” he replied, giving nearly the same reasons Colonel O’Hallaran had done in support of his opinion ; nor could Lord Irnham for a moment suppose he would have placed any
other

other man's son between his own children and two titles.

Never since it came into the possession of the present Earl, had Castle Irnham been so gay as it was during Lord Irnham's residence there. The news of the surrender of B——, which was solely attributed to Lord Delmont's valour and skill, induced his paternal grandfather to give a *fête* to his nearest neighbours, which created general surprise.

Lord Fitzarran only regretted he had not been present when the town capitulated; and, though very sorry his own Irish boy had been such a sufferer, he observed honour could scarcely be purchased at too dear a rate. Lord Irnham was of the same opinion. From his nephew's own letter, and the accounts Lord St. Osyth had transmitted, he was convinced he was in no danger; he therefore gloried in the ardour and spirit he had evinced, and longed more than ever to embrace a youth who bade so fair to retrieve the

the honour of the family, and had, in consequence, almost resolved to pay him a visit in Flanders, when he received a letter from Lord St. Olyth, to inform him that the General who commanded that division of the Army, now encamped near B—, had been so severely wounded in a late skirmish with the enemy, that he was coming home as soon as his surgeons would allow him to travel; and his Lordship had, in consequence, been nominated (at his request) as his successor, having frequently heard him express a wish of that nature; and concluding by requesting to see him in London as soon as possible.

No event could have been more agreeable to Lord Irnham, who, informing Lord Altamont of the occasion and necessity for his speedy departure, set out the very next day upon his return to London. Lord Fitzarran chose to accompany him, and was scarcely less pleased than himself when he learned his appointment, as, under his uncle's eye and care, he thought his beloved Delmont would
be

be exposed to less danger than if left to follow the bent of his own inclinations, which he knew would lead him to face death rather than desert his post; and, to his infinite joy, he found a letter in Park Lane from this idolized grandson, in which he assured him he should very soon be able to take the field again, and trusted the late checks the British had met with, would only serve to animate their courage, and induce them to unite against their common enemy.

Colonel O'Hallaran had not seen service for some time, he observed to Lord Irnham, and sincerely wished his regiment had been ordered abroad.

"If I was not fearful of robbing Lord Fitzarran of a most agreeable companion," replied his Lordship, "I believe I should endeavour to persuade you to visit Flanders. I am permitted to name two Aid-de-Camps; need I say how much I should have rejoiced had you found yourself inclined

inclined to accompany me in that capacity."

"Go by all means, my dear O'Hallaran," cried Lord Fitzarran: "never let your regard for such an useless being as myself tempt you to withhold your services from your King and country. I shall rejoice in the success I am ready to prognosticate will attend you both. Tell my brave boy I feel heart-whole yet; and if I was not certain sleeping in a camp would effectually prevent me from being of any service, I would not have remained behind; but as I have neither strength enough left in my bones to fight, nor agility enough remaining in my spindle shanks to run away, and don't want to see the inside of a French prison, why I will keep out of the way, and only pray the enemies of honest John Bull may never see his back, while any of his sons can wield a musket or a sword in his defence."

Independent of every other consideration, the Colonel's wish to see Lord Delmont would alone have induced him to

accompany his uncle, who learned from Dr. M——, with perhaps as much regret as satisfaction, that the Counsellor was in a state of progressive convalescence. For what must be the sensations of such a man, admitting he did recover his faculties? Surely, he thought, he must be infinitely happier while deprived of his recollection.

Within four days after his return to London, Lord Irnham sailed for Flanders; and reached the head quarters without meeting with any thing worth recording. The Commander in Chief gave him a most gracious reception, and dispatched him immediately to take the command at the camp near B——. He arrived there late that evening, and found the troops in momentary expectation of being attacked by the enemy, at least such was the report of a French deserter, who had come in about an hour before.

The present Commanding Officer would very fain have immediately resigned his post
to

to Lord Irnham ; but his Lordship declared himself so totally unacquainted with the ground and the plan of this meditated attack, that he preferred acting under his orders, and only required to be placed where he could be most useful, and to learn what dispositions were made to act upon the defensive, which, as the enemy's force was much superior in point of number, seemed to be their wisest plan. The Commanding Officer had sent for a reinforcement from B——, though he much doubted whether they would arrive in time to be of any essential service ; still he thought it was his duty, as far as possible, to guard against the worst.

Lord Irnham approved of every thing he had done, and then enquired after his nephew and his predecessor. Lord Delmont was upon the recovery, he was informed, and very anxious to resume his post. It was much to be regretted, the Officer added, they were deprived of his services upon the present occasion, as few men were more deservedly popular

popular, or more likely to excite the troops to victory. Of the Nuns this gentleman knew but little, therefore said nothing. The late General had been removed to a neighbouring Castle, and great hopes were entertained of his recovery.

A little before midnight a second deserter came in, who brought an account of an additional and unexpected reinforcement having arrived at the French camp, and that every preparation was making to attack the British by daybreak. A second messenger was therefore dispatched to hasten the march of the troops from B——; and again the Commanding Officer lamented Lord Delme's confinement, as even the example of such a man would have been of infinite service at this alarming juncture. Every disposition, however, that prudence could suggest, was adopted to avoid what the Generals began seriously to dread, namely, a defeat. Lord Irnham did all in his power to animate the soldiers, when the expected attack commenced;

but, after a most obstinate and bloody resistance, the British forces were obliged to give way, and a well-conducted retreat was all the Generals could hope to effect; when the French unexpectedly received a very serious check from the reinforcement which arrived from B—— at this very critical moment, and which attacked them in their rear, with a degree of skill and bravery characteristic of their nation. In a few moments, therefore, the scene was entirely changed by a most judicious arrangement of the Officer who commanded the newly-arrived troops. A large party of the enemy were surrounded and made prisoners, which threw the main body of their army into confusion, and allowed the other British troops to rally, and return to the assistance of their brave countrymen.

Lord Irnham, who had fought by the side of the Commanding Officer, upon perceiving the skilful feint that had been put in practice in their behalf, exclaimed—"By heavens,

heavens, the great Frederic himself could not have displayed more profound knowledge of the art of war, than has been done by whomever has the command of that handful of brave men!"

"Colonel Sedley has ever been reckoned a brave Officer," was the reply, "and he has proved himself a very skilful one. But I am of opinion his little troop had better draw nearer the main body, or it may be enveloped by a similar feint to the one it has so successfully put in practice."

"Suffer me to convey your orders and our thanks to Colonel Sedley," said Lord Irnham. "Such Officers cannot meet with too great encouragement, for it is wholly owing to his skill that the reinforcement he brought to our assistance, situated as we were, proved of the least service."

The other General agreed there was infinite justice in Lord Irnham's remark; who, taking a proper circuit, to avoid falling into the enemy's hands, galloped towards the

newly-arrived corps. The ranks made way for him as he advanced. A young man, with his left arm in a scarf, was giving his orders with the greatest deliberation (considering his youth and success, Lord Inham thought) respecting the prisoners he had taken; and perceiving a General Officer, with whom he was totally unacquainted, advancing towards him, he approached to receive the orders he presumed he brought, and to request to know what was to be done with the prisoners.

“ Colonel Sedley, I congratulate you most sincerely upon the essential service you have been able to render your country’s cause.”

Lord Delmont, for it was him he addressed, felt infinitely flattered, while, with a deference he ever evinced to his superior Officers, he replied—“ A severe illness, General, prevented Colonel Sedley from displaying his courage and skill in our behalf; and, though conscious many other Officers would have perhaps more ably supplied his place, I could
not

not remain at B——, while I entertained hopes that my exertions might be useful to the common cause. My name is Delmont."

"Then I rejoice, if possible, still more in your recent success, my dear nephew. 'Tis your uncle who addresses you," alighting from his horse, and catching the young Peer in his arms: "you will make me ample amends for these misfortunes we must both regret. But moments are precious—adieu, my brave fellow! take care of yourself for the sake of your friends. I must leave you for the present: draw your troops rather nearer the main body, and believe me I glory in the laurels you have obtained.

Then, without giving Delmont, who was scarcely recovered from his surprise, time to answer, he galloped back to his former post, and exultingly proclaimed the name of him to whom every one chiefly attributed their victory, which soon became as complete as their defeat had been thought certain.

Colonel O'Hallaran gloried in Lord Delmont's fresh honours, and only regretted he had not witnessed the first meeting between the uncle and nephew. The precipitate retreat of the French, who fled on all sides, as it was not thought proper to pursue them, left the British masters of the field of battle, and afforded Lord Delmont leisure to join his uncle and Colonel O'Hallaran. He had learned Lord Irnham's return to England, but little expected, as he observed, to have seen him in Flanders.

The other General was fearful he had ventured out too soon; and it must be acknowledged, from not having had any rest the preceding night, during which he had come from B——, and several hours' very hard fighting, his spirits began to decline when his personal exertions to animate his men became no longer necessary. Lord Irnham insisted upon his immediately retiring, and endeavouring to take some repose; and, upon understanding his wounds were not yet closed, was half
tempted

tempted to blame him for exertions, which, though they had proved of material service to his country, might have the most serious consequences with regard to his own health. Nor did the surgeon, who examined Lord Delmont's arm, remove his uncle's fears; he declared his patient had acted very imprudently, and had brought on a great degree of inflammation, attended with some fever.

Lord Irnham and Colonel O'Hallaran therefore accompanied the young Peer to the Castle, where the wounded General had been removed, and where they procured every necessary accommodation for the invalid, who had left his valet and baggage at B——, whither, if he survived the battle, he had intended to return with the troops. As soon as he was in bed, his uncle and the Colonel satisfied him respecting his friends in England, and informed him that Mr. Egerton (they did not chuse to wound his feelings by styling him his father), was upon the recovery.

His Lordship, in his turn, entered into several details respecting the ladies he had left at B——, whom he strongly recommended to his uncle's protection, hinting his apprehensions that they had some reason either to fear or dislike his father.

Lord Irnham promised to take an early opportunity of seeing them, and of affording them every protection they could require. Then thinking repose would be of more service than medicine to Lord Delmont, he left him under the care of his own valet, whom he knew to be both an excellent nurse and a very tolerable surgeon; and having visited the General whom he was come to succeed, and who sincerely rejoiced in their recent success, he returned with his Aid-de-Camp to the Army, of which he now assumed the supreme command, and made every disposition to prevent their being again taken by surprise, and unprepared to resist the serious attacks of the Republican troops, whose enthusiasm led them to brave dangers which frequently appalled the bravest of their opponents.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

WHEN the General's orders for part of the garrison to march to his assistance, reached B——, the Officer, upon whom the command of the troops would naturally have devolved, was confined with a very bad fever. It was therefore thought necessary to inform Lord Delmont, who was the next in command, of the requisition; and though yet unable to make the slightest use of his left arm, he resolved to share the glory of his men; therefore hastily dressing himself, and ordering the drums to beat to arms, he sat down to write a few lines to his female companions, who, awakened by the noise and bustle which prevailed in the town, rushed into his room in the

greatest terror, conceiving the enemy were at the gates. Totally forgetting their late resentment, they now clung to him for protection, entreating he would not leave them; for having found him up, dressed, and armed, had greatly increased their alarm. His resentment all fled upon recollecting he might perhaps never again see Eliza. In the most soothing terms he requested her to compose herself, informing her of his intended departure, and endeavouring to cheer her spirits by promising to return as speedily as possible.

"I presume your Lordship must go," said the mother, while Eliza, drowned in tears, threw herself into the nearest chair. "If so, you will have our best wishes and most fervent prayers for your safety, though I really think you are not yet well enough to resume your command; and remember there are times when even the calls of honour ought to be disobeyed. Do you expect to return hither?"

"That, you know, ladies, in a great measure depends upon the General; but, at all events, you

you shall hear from me if I should not revisit B——, where I mean, at present, to leave my own man and my baggage ;—he has received orders to obey any commands you may find it expedient to give, and to provide you with every thing you can want, till I either return or can recommend you to some of the superior Officers, who will doubtless facilitate your return to England, where, I think, you will be much safer than among contending armies; but of this you must be the best judge. For the present, farewell !”

The mother presented him her hand, and would have spoke, but tears choked her utterance.

Lord Delmont was distressed.—“ Believe me I did not mean to insinuate you were in any immediate danger. My dear Ma’am, this town is certainly not menaced at present by the French.—Good night, my young friend ! I hope I shall see you again to-morrow ; but even moments are precious at

this juncture ; the troops must be ready to march."

Eliza would have wished him success, and have preferred a prayer for his safety ; but, far from being able to speak, she sunk into her mother's arms, endeavouring to conceal the excess of her grief by hiding her face in her bosom. Lord Delmont's sensations were not of the most enviable nature. They might never meet again, he reflected, as he left the room : and his heart reproached him for what he now considered as his past unkindness towards this lovely, innocent girl. He returned into the room as if in search of something he had forgot, and heard the mother, her voice interrupted by her sobs, endeavouring to reconcile her daughter to his necessary departure.

" I hope to bring you the first account of our victory," he said, taking a hand of each, which he would have raised to his lips ; but the mother presented her cheek, and Eliza was still

still more kind. The favour was remembered with gratitude ; and perhaps his wish to convince them both he was deserving of that esteem they seemed of late to have refused him, rather contributed to his late success.—He was, however, very happy his uncle had promised to take them under his immediate protection, as he was particularly anxious to have Eliza further removed from the seat of war, though he had not the slightest intention of ever making her an offer of his hand, as he could not flatter himself his relations would approve of his forming such a connexion ; yet he more than ever longed to know who she really was, and how she came to be at all connected with his father's family : and his account of this mother and daughter, of the picture which he fancied resembled his father, and the evident dislike the former had testified for him from the moment she understood he was a son of Mr. Egerton's, had so greatly excited the curiosity of his uncle and Colonel O'Hallaran, that they resolved, under pretence of examining the fortifications, to
set

set out for B—— that very evening, with the troops who were to march thither, meaning to pass the night there, and return early the next morning to the camp.

During their ride Lord Irnham protested he never could have believed he should have felt so strong an affection for any of his brother's children as he already did for Lord Delmont, of whose birth he no longer entertained the slightest doubt; the strong resemblance he bore his father confuting every thing the Counsellor had ever advanced.

“He is prodigiously like your Lordship,” replied the Colonel. “I thought so the very first time I saw him, but to-day it struck me still more forcibly.”

“Well, and don't you think a great family likeness subsists between me and Charles?”

“There certainly does, though both you and Lord Delmont have greatly the advantage
of

of Mr. Egerton in point of features, and the general expression of your countenances."

"An excellent distinction, Colonel; but can you imagine who these women are from Delmont's account? I am half inclined to think they were confined by my wretched brother's orders."

"A strange idea has come across my mind," replied the Colonel. "The Irish woman who gave my brother-in-law the first intelligence respecting my niece, told him both she and her child were dead. Now she so evidently deceived him with respect to the latter, I conceive it very possible my niece may still be living; and as the Counsellor had very cogent reasons for keeping their union a secret, who knows but he may have confined her and her daughter (for such I suppose the young Eliza to be) in the very Convent where Lord Delmont found them."

"This would certainly account for the dislike she manifested towards Delmont," replied Lord Irnham; "and, considering my brother's character, is really probable; though

I wonder

"I wonder he did not remove them before the war broke out."

"Perhaps the Princess of Rosenwald was to have undertaken that task."

"Very possible; but do you think you should know your niece again?"

"No, positively; she was a beautiful girl, but three-and-twenty years have probably made some alteration in her features."

Their arrival at B—— obliged them to change their discourse. Lord Irnham visited the citadel, fortifications, &c. and gave every necessary order to the garrison: having thus done what he considered as his duty, he prepared to gratify his curiosity. A soldier conducted them to the Convent, and a lay-sister led them to the apartment Lord Delmont had so lately vacated: here they found Martin, who was overjoyed to learn his master had been so successful. Lord Irnham told him to get every thing ready to return with them, and then asked where he should find the ladies he was come to visit. The valet opened the

the door of an inner room, at the upper end of which sat the two Nuns near a small table.

“Two gentlemen from my Lord,” said Martin.

The ladies rose, and Eliza, hastily advancing, betrayed the interest she took in Lord Delmont's fate, by her anxious questions respecting his health, and the joy she evinced when informed of his success. Meanwhile the mother's eyes were fixed upon Lord Irnham, who was assuring Eliza he came ambassador from Lord Delmont to offer her and her mother his protection and best services, as they both thought they had better remove from B—— before any future danger could arise from the approach of the enemy.

The mother was anxiously listening to the sound of his voice; and, before he ceased speaking, ejaculating a faint murmur which none of them understood, she fell senseless on the floor. Eliza shrieked most violently, while

the

the gentlemen, hardly knowing to what to attribute her disorder, raised the lifeless body, which having placed upon the bed, the Colonel returned to Lord Delmont's room, where, as he expected, he found plenty of restoratives; and Martin went in search of one of the lay-sisters, who readily came to their assistance. The Colonel presumed that the lady's joy, upon finding her emancipation absolutely confirmed, had overcome her: but Eliza was convinced she was dead; however, to her infinite relief, her mother soon gave signs of life; and, after a short time, opened her eyes, which were again fixed upon Lord Irnham, and the first word they understood, was a declaration "that she could not be mistaken."

"What is it you mean, my dear Ma'am?" said his Lordship. "I am fearful some unpleasant recollections have occasioned your late disorder. Be assured we come to protect, not to injure you."

"Believe me, gentlemen, I entertain no doubt of either your honour or probity; but
may

may I know (for my bewildered senses may have deceived me), may I know who I am addressing?"

"My name is Egerton, Ma'am, though I am commonly called Lord Irnham. I have very lately taken the command of this division of his Britannic Majesty's Army; and this gentleman is Colonel O'Hallaran, and my chief Aid-de-Camp. My nephew is fearful, from various observations he had occasion to make, and from your reserve towards him after you learned his relationship to Mr. Egerton, that you either fancy, or have reason to suppose, some part of our family were accessory to your late confinement; if he is right in his conjectures, let me request you would be candid, and depend upon receiving ample redress for any real or imaginary wrong you may have suffered."

"Your Lordship possesses the same noble, generous spirit for which you were so renowned in your youth. I have been wronged, greatly wronged; but to make my story perfectly clear, I must commence it from
a very

a very early period. I should not thus venture to trespass upon your time and patience, if you were not interested in my narrative. Your nephew has convinced me he resembles you as much in point of disposition as he does in point of features, else he would hardly have recommended to your notice two persons, who certainly, contrary to their better judgment, treated him with a degree of ingratitude, which no apologies can extenuate ; but our reserve arose from circumstances deeply interwoven with my story, and delicacy, as well as prudence, prevented us from entering into details that would, with more propriety, have been addressed to any other Officer in the Army."

" You greatly excite my curiosity, Ma'am ; depend, as I told you before, upon my best services. Perhaps—— but I don't wish to form any conjectures. Let me only request you would, as briefly as circumstances will admit, relate why you were confined within these walls ; and trust to my candour and impartiality, let who will have been
your

your oppressor, to procure you ample redress."

"I will endeavour to obey your Lordship's injunctions.—But first, my dear girl, give me half a glass of wine. I never stood in greater need of a cordial to raise my spirits."

"Perhaps you, gentlemen, will follow my example."

While Eliza was obeying her mother, Lord Irnham was, in his turn, examining her features; and the more he gazed, the more anxious he grew to hear her story. Eliza was certainly very handsome; but she was so very unlike her mother, he could not believe they were so nearly related. His impatience rather increasing; he politely hinted, if she was sufficiently recovered, he should wish she would inform him who she was, and of whom she had to complain. Having given a few moments to reflection, she entered upon the story we mean to detail in the following chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

“VERY early in life, my Lord, I married a most amiable man, every way my superior. Of his father, I shall only say he was undeserving such a son. The imprudence, however, my beloved husband committed when he honoured me with his hand, obliged him to try if Fortune would prove more propitious to him in India, than it seemed likely to do in England.”

Lord Irnham became agitated, and the Colonel was all attention. She proceeded.

“We sailed for Calcutta, and not long after I presented him with a son.” Tears choked

choked her utterance for a few seconds; and when able to speak—"Of him I have been most barbarously deprived—but I am wandering from my story."

"Proceed, proceed, I entreat!" cried Lord Irnham. "My brain is on fire, and I dare neither trust my eyes nor my ears."

"Had I been allowed my own option," she continued, "I should never have left the best of husbands and of men; not that I had any forebodings of the evils which awaited me from the treachery of the—I dare not affix the stigma he deserves to the name of Lord Delmont's father."

Lord Irnham started from his seat, and caught her in his arms, exclaiming—"It must be my adored and long lost Eliza!"

She met his embrace.—"And can your Lordship deign to acknowledge me before you are convinced I am still deserving the love you once bore me?"

"Had you ever, either in thought, word, or deed, wronged the man who now enfolds
you

you in his arms, my Eliza, your cruel oppressor need not have confined you within these walls; by publishing your shame, he would as effectually have separated us—he is a disgrace to human nature! But our son——”

“Of him, my Lord, I can give you no information; possibly the barbarian sacrificed him to the interest of his own children. This dear girl has been my only consolation under all my afflictions.”

Colonel O'Hallaran, who had not been an unmoved spectator of the recent scene, could not help breaking in upon the mutual felicity of his dearest friends.—“You had no daughter when you left Calcutta, dearest Lady Irnham; may I flatter myself——”

“I should have thought, Colonel, you would have hardly needed any farther explanation,” replied the smiling Viscountess; “but remember, though I acknowledge you have a legal right to my dear girl, I shall never relinquish my daughter.”

Ere

Ere she had ceased speaking, Eliza was greeted by the most affectionate paternal embrace. Hitherto this lovely girl had considered her kind preceptress as her mother; indeed all she knew of Lady Irnham's history was, that she had been confined by the instigation of one of the vilest of men, who was the original of the portrait that had attracted Lord Delmont's notice, and that his name was Charles Egerton. The rapturous moment, therefore, that robbed her of this pleasing illusion, rendered her the least happy of the present company.

“ Well, but now, my love,” said Lord Irnham, “ do inform us by what miraculous interposition of Providence you were saved; for the ship in which you embarked was certainly lost upon the coast of Normandy.”

“ It certainly was, my dear Irnham; and that very unforeseen event enabled Mr. Egerton to deprive me of my liberty, and of my child. But to return to my narrative; though a lapse of twenty years has not

reconciled me to the loss of my blooming boy. The day previous to that on which the ship went to the bottom, had been dreadful beyond description, at least so said the mariners. It was growing dark; the sun had not been seen all day, and I was seated in my cabin, watching over my precious charge, when a sudden shock threw me from my seat, and a general scream proclaimed the ship had struck upon a sunken rock, near the coast of France. Already more dead than alive for some time, I resigned myself to that fate I thought inevitable; but the sight of the lovely babes, whom the clamour had awakened, brought me to my recollection; a sort of frenzy seized me:—snatching them up one under each arm, I ran upon deck to see if any means could be devised for their preservation; all was hurry and confusion, but I heard the Captain say, the ship had received so little damage, he hoped, as the tide was coming in very fast, she would be easily got off. It was yet sufficiently light to see the people on shore, and I entreated to be sent thither

thither with my children, but was assured no boat could live in such a sea. My increasing terror gave me strength; I ran about the deck, imploring the mercy of people in equal danger with myself, and of course little inclined to treat me with particular commiseration: I was therefore repeatedly desired to stand out of the way, and frequently told if I did not return to my cabin, I should be washed over-board. I paid no attention to what any one said; indeed I began hardly to care how soon I was out of my misery, as my fears grew more acute every moment, till I fancied I perceived something upon the water coming with the tide, which proved to be a boat, rowed by a single youth, who made every exertion to reach the ship. His rashness was condemned by every one, myself excepted, on board; indeed every moment I expected to see him perish in the foaming waves, which, at times, quite concealed him from my sight. On my knees I prayed he might be spared; my earnest supplications, I trust, were heard. He dropped along-side of the

vessel, to which he clung by the means of a rope. 'Oh save me and my children!' I cried in the language he understood. Spent with fatigue, he only begged for a few moments' rest; but did not offer to quit his little bark, while I prayed incessantly to be delivered from my present perilous situation. Those who paid any attention to what I either did or said, declared I was mad, and that they would not run the risk I wished to encounter for any bribe.

"The Captain had declared the ship would not go to pieces, and it would be little less than braving certain death, to venture upon such a sea, with an unexperienced youth, a Frenchman besides, and in so small a boat. That unerring Providence, however, who thought proper to reserve me for this blissful moment, led me to reflect that since this youth had been permitted to reach the ship, why might not the same Power suffer him to return to shore? Excess of benevolence alone could have tempted him to hazard his own life to endeavour to save
some

some of us; and I trusted his purpose would meet with favour in the sight of the Supreme Being; and, at all events, if I was to perish, I cared not how soon I was out of my misery. Fraught with these ideas, I again implored him to save my children.

‘With God’s will, I mean to endeavour to save you all three,’ he replied, putting out his arms for my infants, whom I handed to him. He laid them in the bottom of his little boat, and then reached out his hand for me, cautioning me to mind and step as he directed. I strictly attended to his injunctions, and, by his desire, laid down between my two babes, promising to move as little as possible. He then let go his hold, and we were instantly carried off from the ship; how he managed afterwards I cannot pretend to say, but the tide took us to a considerable distance; and it was near an hour, which did not appear one of the shortest in my life, before I felt we touched the shore, when my deliverer, starting up, cried ‘Quick! this moment! or we may again ——’ I heard

no more; but catching hold of my Eliza—he had got my son—we scrambled up the mud: and thus were we most miraculously saved.

“ Nothing like an habitation was to be seen. I was, as you may suppose, completely drenched, as well as the children, who were besides almost suffocated, from having, owing to their screams, swallowed a great deal of sea water. He dragged us along till he considered us in perfect safety, when he wished to leave us to go in quest of his boat; but I conjured him not to abandon us in such a dreadful situation, promising I would amply repay him for any loss he might sustain: he therefore acceded to my entreaties, and we mutually returned our thanks where they were most due, for the late wonderful interposition of Providence in our favour.

“ The night was so dark, and there being no road to guide us, we walked at random till a distant light, proceeding from a cottage, cheered my weary spirits. The wind had rather abated, but the violence of the waves and breakers within shore appeared rather to
have

have increased. Having found it impossible to pacify the terrified children, their incessant screams drew the inhabitants of the hut we now had in view, to our assistance. They were a fisherman and his family, and fortunately known to my deliverer, who briefly explained how we came to stand in need of his assistance. The fisherman lifted up his hands and eyes in mute astonishment when he learned the perils we had escaped, and told me I had indeed been wonderfully preserved; for the ship I had left, had no sooner floated, than dashing again with more violence than ever upon the rock, she went down in a few minutes, and every soul on board her had perished: and this was doubtless the only account you ever received, I can suppose, my dear Irnham. I can't pretend to describe my feelings when I learned this sad catastrophe. My gratitude towards Heaven and my deliverer was, I trust, unbounded. I was not allowed to reward him as I could have wished; but, happily, what Mr. Egerton did chuse to give him, more than repaid him

for the loss he had incurred to save me. But to return to the fisherman's cot.

"We were all three immediately stripped by his wife and daughters, and placed in a warm, though homely bed. Some brandy and water revived our drooping spirits; and strange as it may appear, I attribute my absolute recovery from the complaint which had so long hung about me, solely to the revolution that night occasioned in my constitution. Sleep at length calmed my agitated spirits; and I awoke in the morning refreshed, and comparatively well to what I could have expected. My guardian angel, for such I styled the youth to whom I owed my life, had been, during the night, to enquire if any person besides myself had survived the wreck; and you will believe I learned with sincere regret, no soul had been saved, and what few things had been cast on shore, were seized by the neighbouring peasants.

"As I was therefore destitute of even a change of linen, and had very little money in my pocket, I thought it best to write to Mr. Egerton

Egerton, as I could not think of setting out for England, unprovided as my children and I were of even common necessities. I continued at the cottage which first afforded me shelter, whose kind inhabitants did all in their power to render every thing as commodious as possible, during nine days I remained with them; at the expiration of which time, I was agreeably surpris'd by the appearance of Mr. Egerton, attributing this visit solely to his wish to see and render me every service in his power. You will believe I felt infinitely grateful for so kind a mark of his attention. By his desire I instantly prepared to accompany him to a neighbouring town, where I could provide myself with a change of apparel, &c. I won't say he rewarded either my deliverer or my kind host—he simply paid them what was really their due; and I determin'd to interest you, my dearest Irnham, in their behalf—you who ever so well knew how to distinguish between profusion and parsimony. That we might not be impos'd upon, or oblig'd to spend a great

deal of money, Mr. Egerton advised me to drop my title while we remained in France; and as we were totally unattended, and certainly travelled in the most economical manner, I readily conformed to his advice. Having provided myself and children with clothes, I became anxious to return to England; but he persuaded me the climate of France was more likely to restore my former strength; and as I certainly mended daily, and had written a long account of my wonderful escape to you and my father, which Mr. Egerton had, as I fully supposed, forwarded to England, I grew more reconciled to remaining longer abroad than I had at first intended; but at the expiration of a month his behaviour grew so unpleasantly familiar, that I was, against my inclination, obliged to treat him with infinite reserve; indeed, considering his disposition, I was astonished he had so long neglected his business, apparently upon my account. I now hinted to him that I might, should the air of England not agree with me, return at some future period to France,

France, but I could not think of detaining him any longer from his wife, his family, and his business.—My wishes should ever be his guide, he told me; and he gave such a turn to what he perceived had induced me to hasten our return, that I was really angry with myself for having so egregiously misunderstood him.

“ On the day previous to that on which it had been agreed we should commence our journey, he received a letter from England, he said, to request he would transact some business of importance for a friend at St. Germain; he therefore hoped I should have no objection to remaining where I was, during his absence, which would not certainly exceed four days. As he doubtless foresaw, I readily agreed to wait his return, and his absence did not exceed the time he mentioned. Totally unacquainted as I then was with France, his preferring to cross the country to Calais instead of embarking at Dieppe, did not strike me as extraordinary; and so long as we were but on the road, I did not entertain a doubt of its being the one I wished, and

ought to have gone; but on the evening when he gave me to understand we should reach Calais, I found myself within these walls, and a prisoner. The chaise had drove within the great gates, and he had, as usual, handed me out, and placed that dear girl in my arms, as he had always done before wherever we stopped. I presumed he was following me with our dear O'Brien; instead of which, having advanced a few steps within the Convent, I heard the door barred upon me, and found myself at the same moment surrounded by Nuns, who had kept out of sight till it was impossible for me to retreat; the portress not wearing the habit, had completely deceived me into the belief of its being an inn. Astonishment for a moment bereft me of speech: I then loudly enquired for Mr. Egerton and my son. No gentleman was ever permitted to enter the Convent, I was informed. Then why was I brought thither? I anxiously demanded. My own conscience, they should have supposed, would have made my last question useless. In short, suffice it to say,

say, I but too soon discovered I was to all intents and purposes a prisoner. Had the monster left me my son, I should have borne this dreadful reverse of fortune with more fortitude; but such lenity would ill have accorded with his disposition. Neither threats nor entreaties had the slightest effect upon the holy sisterhood by whom I was surrounded; my grief excited no commiseration. I was only warned it would be most prudent to endeavour to conciliate the favour of the Abbess by mildness and submission, as I was now wholly at her mercy.

“ I scarcely know what I replied, but I was immediately conducted into the very cell where Lord Delmont found me, and locked in with an elderly Nun, whom it was thought proper to place over me, lest I should endeavour, in my first paroxysms of grief, to make away with myself.

“ How your brother managed to bring the whole Community over to his interest, I can't yet fathom, though I suppose a considerable bribe gained over the Abbess and Confessor:

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in which case the Nuns merely obeyed their orders.

“ The few cloaths I had purchased for myself and the young Eliza were sent me the next day ; and in the bundle was an English Bible, which I had picked up at an inn where we had lodged, for three livres. It had been left there by some travellers : the master considered it as an useless piece of lumber ; but it now became my greatest treasure, and I have often wondered I was permitted to keep it. But I ought to have observed, the hopes I entertained of seeing Mr. Egerton before he left the town, rather kept up my spirits during the first night of my imprisonment, as I presumed he would wish to account in some manner for having thus treacherously confined me ; however I was deceived in my conjectures, for I have never either seen or heard from him since he decoyed me within these walls.

“ The Confessor waited upon me in the evening, and assured me my son would be taken the utmost care of, and that my own
behaviour

behaviour would regulate their future treatment of me. I would have told him my story, but he refused to listen to me, and desired me to assume the habit of the sacred order it was expected I should embrace. I raved, wept, and entreated, vowing I never would consent to such a sacrilege; and was finally informed I should not be forced to take the vows, provided I immediately assumed the dress, and conformed to the general rules of the votaries of St. Clare.

“ Upon these conditions, I acceded to their wishes; and the hopes I continued to entertain of being one day liberated from my cruel confinement, I believe preserved both my reason and health. I put my sincere trust in that Power, who had already so miraculously preserved my life, and in time grew more reconciled to my situation. The little Eliza also proved a source of continual amusement and occupation.

“ I will not tire your patience with repeating the various arguments that were made use of to induce me to change my religion. It

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is enough to say I continued firm to my creed ; and presume I met with more lenity than Lady Abbesses and their Confessors generally shew to people so completely in their power, owing to a handsome salary, Mr. Egerton certainly paid for my board ; which rendered it their interest to endeavour to preserve my life, and to allow me and my Eliza many comforts and indulgences, which I can't do them the justice to suppose we owed to their benevolence.

“ Hitherto this dear girl has considered herself as my daughter ; and remember, Colonel, I shall ever consider her in the same light. I never gave her any reason to suppose she would ever quit these walls, fearful I should render her miserable by exciting hopes which might never be realized. I only strove to render her as happy as circumstances would admit, and to give her the best education in my power ; and she is yet young enough to acquire many accomplishments she has hitherto been debarred from attaining : but these

these are matters we can talk over at some future period.

“ We were totally unacquainted with the surprising Revolution which has taken place in France, till serious fears began to be entertained for the safety of this town; though we had for some time remarked an unusual gloom upon the countenances of our unfeeling gaolers, who at last thought it necessary to leave their hallowed mansion. Every means persuasion could devise, were used to induce me to accompany them in their flight, and I need not add, in vain; for the bare idea of falling into the hands of the English delighted me beyond measure; nor did I once reflect upon what might be the consequence of their success, though I am convinced the brave soldiers who terrified us so cruelly, had no intention to insult their countrywomen: yet I have frequently shuddered to think what might have been our fate, but for the generous interposition of Lord Delmont, who reminded me so strongly of what you were when we last parted, that the very moment I beheld

beheld him, I could almost have fancied I was again at Calcutta. But I felt tempted to murmur at the resemblance when he told me he was the son of my greatest and only enemy; and I sincerely wished any other person had laid us under similar obligations. I am sensible I must have appeared both capricious and ungrateful in his eyes, and I certainly am not exempt from blame; though, of all men in the world, he would have been the most improper I could have chosen for a confidant. Yet I think he gave me to understand he was not upon very friendly terms with his father."

"You are perfectly right in your conjectures, my love," said Lord Irnham. "I have listened with sensations bordering on horror, to many parts of your very interesting narrative; but your abandoned and unprincipled persecutor is, I really believe, capable of any crimes. He has very lately been deprived of his senses, owing, it is supposed, to the discovery of one of his many iniquitous schemes. I am but just returned from India."

"Then

"Then nothing has ever transpired respecting our son?" interrupted her Ladyship. "Can you form no idea what can have become of our lost darling?"

"What say you, O'Hallaran? Give us your opinion," said Lord Irnham.

"If it could be once proved that my niece's son really died, as his nurse supposed, I should not have a doubt remaining," he replied. "But was the young O'Brien distinguished by any mark likely to identify his person, Lady Irnham?"

"None that I know of, my friend. He was reckoned, as you may remember, very like his father."

"And you took Lord Delmont for that father," rejoined the Colonel.

"Why, is there a possibility, nay the shadow of probability, he can be our son? Speak, dearest Irnham!—Colonel, relieve my anxiety. Your daughter is restored to your arms; surely your own feelings upon that occasion may lead you to imagine what mine now are."

"There

“ There is a possibility, my dear love. At present we can say no more. You shall hear our Delmont's story ; *our's* I call him, for should the hope I venture to entertain be disappointed, he certainly deserves both our love and our esteem.”—He then entered into the various details respecting his nephew and brother, which had led both him and the Colonel to hope the former was still nearer related to Lord Irnham.

“ The wretched Egerton cannot be his father !” exclaimed her Ladyship. “ His strong likeness to you, my dear Irnham, and his own account of himself, convinces me he is our son. To what else can you attribute the implacable hatred your brother seems ever to have borne him.”

“ Were presumptive proof sufficient to confirm our claim, I believe we might venture to assert Delmont is our son. But Lord Fitzarran, who perfectly idolizes the amiable youth, and who is a most excellent man, may
not

not be inclined to put such implicit faith in what we believe, but certainly cannot prove. My brother's son, he would very properly alledge, might bear more resemblance to me than to his father, as such likenesses have been frequently remarked, but seldom made the foundation of a claim to the child. Delmont's remembering he was in a ship, may be accounted for as it has been already; and my brother's hatred towards him may have originated in his being, much against his will, forced to acknowledge his legitimacy. Should my brother recover his senses, the mystery may be elucidated to our satisfaction; for the present, we must confine our hopes and wishes to our own bosoms, nor do I think Delmont ought to be informed of the recent discoveries."

"Certainly not," rejoined Colonel O'Hallaran; "nor would I advise their being as yet publicly made known to the Army. Lord St. Osyth is strongly attached to Lord Delmont: suppose your Lordship writes to him and my worthy brother-in-law (who certainly

has

has almost a right to our confidence), an account of this very fortunate encounter. I would have you candidly acknowledge to both the hopes you entertain respecting Lord Delmont; though, except the Counsellor does recover, and is inclined to acknowledge the truth, I positively don't see how you will ever be at any greater certainty than you are at present. But this will prepare Lord Fitzarran for what, upon our friend's account, I am sure he will rejoice at; and I am convinced Lord St. Osyth will have interest enough to procure your immediate recal, which, circumstanced as you now are, is rather to be wished. Meanwhile Lady Irnham and my Eliza can be provided with accommodations in the same house with Lord Delmont, who may be, with justice, told they were confined by his father, and he will ask no further questions."

A rap at the door prevented him from proceeding, as he hastened to open it. Martin came to inform them that two soldiers had just brought an old Friar, who appeared to be
almost

almost at his last gasp, into the next room. Lord Irnham and the ladies followed the Colonel into the adjoining apartment, where stood a Monk, apparently in the agonies of death, supported by two soldiers.

“Where did you meet with this miserable being?” asked Lord Irnham.

“Searching about in the cellars, General, we heard a strange noise that we could not account for; but at last we discovered a little private door, which we had passed a hundred times before I will be sworn, without noticing it; and there, unable to get up, lay this old man: and so, as we could not understand him, (indeed he can’t speak), and as we thought there might be some treasures concealed, or such-like, knowing your Lordship was in the house, we brought him to you.”

“It is Father Peter,” cried Lady Irnham, “the Confessor of the Convent. How came it he did not accompany the Nuns in their flight?”

“Bring him in here, my friends,” said his Lordship,

Lordship, "leading the way into the inner room."

They did as he desired ; and, after placing him in a chair, retired with Martin. The old man endeavoured to speak, but could not even articulate a word. Eliza handed him a tumbler of wine, which he drank very eagerly.

"Is this the wretch who advised you to assume the dress of their order, my love ?" asked Lord Inham.

"The same ; and I can't conceive what has induced him to remain at B——."

"Avarice, I would lay my life," said Colonel O'Hallaran ; "but as he may throw some light upon many parts of your Ladyship's story, let us endeavour to recover him."

Some wine was therefore warmed, and he was made to swallow that, and eat some biscuits ; and his faintness having been principally occasioned by inanition, in less than an hour

hour he was able to utter a few distinct words, and soon afterwards to speak, though with difficulty, very intelligibly.

CHAP. XVIII.

LADY IRNHAM took upon herself to question him; and first enquired why he had remained at B——, and how he came to be in the cellar where the soldiers had discovered him?

He said he could not think of leaving the Convent, though he had advised the Nuns to such a step, knowing what they would have to fear should the town be taken by assault; but as, even in that case, he trusted it would not remain long in the power of the English,

he thought he had provided against the worst, and that he could have escaped, whenever he chose, from the place of his concealment; but his meals became so scanty, and were so unlike the nourishment he was accustomed to take, which, added to the want of fresh air, and the unwholesome damp of the vault he had chosen for his retreat, his strength had decreased so rapidly, that when he wished to have made his escape, as the only means of preserving his life, he had been unable to open the door of his dungeon, which he had secured against intruders; his groans had therefore brought the soldiers to his assistance, and she knew the rest.

“ Then now, Father, as you hope for either mercy in this world, or salvation in that to come, tell me what induced you to receive my daughter and myself within these walls, and what bribe was of sufficient magnitude to render you deaf to all my remonstrances and entreaties to be set at liberty. That Nobleman now commands here; and when I tell

tell you it is Lord Irnham, I need not add he is my husband; for I have both told and wrote you my story. You also know that young lady is not my daughter; and I will further inform you this gentleman is Colonel O'Hallaran. Heaven is just, therefore, you perceive: so now, if you can, endeavour to palliate your past conduct towards us—for how often on my knees have I besought your pity!"

"I acknowledge my behaviour towards you, Lady, has been cruel in the extreme: but avarice hardened my heart; besides both the Abbess and myself considered it our duty to enrich our monastery by every means in our power, and sometimes our conduct was certainly very unjustifiable;—yet you might have fallen into worse hands; there are many Convents where you would have been much worse treated. You wish to know what induced the Abbess and myself to receive you within these walls: I will endeavour to comply with your desire.

"Four days before your arrival, an

English gentleman waited upon me; and after a short preamble, told me he had an abandoned sister, whom he wished to confine for life, together with an infant, born in iniquity, which was not her only child, as she had also a boy two years old; but him he meant to adopt and provide for as his own. Understanding what he meant, I conducted him to the Abbess, who, by my advice, readily consented to receive and confine the infamous creature he represented you to be. He then warned us to be particularly on our guard against becoming your dupes, as you would endeavour to impose upon us by the most artful stories; he must, therefore, before he placed you under our protection, exact the most solemn oath from us, that we would never permit you to relate any tale respecting yourself, nor, on any pretence, suffer you either to write, or to hold communication with any person from without; and of course you were never to set your feet without the walls.

“The rules of the house were so strict,
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we assured him, that we should find no difficulty in complying with all his requests; and we therefore took the oath he required.

“Not considering it our business to enquire too minutely into his motives for these precautions, we were to suppose we were doing our duty; and if we were paid accordingly, we never refused to receive such inmates, upon our own terms being complied with. We therefore informed him we should expect five thousand livres to be given immediately, and four thousand to be paid annually for both you and your child; and in case of your death, two thousand for your daughter: but if you were the survivor, not less than three, as you would give much the most trouble.

“He made no objection to our terms, nor to an agreement being drawn up by a neighbouring notary, who frequently did business of that sort for the Convent; only he desired a clause might be added, that if he dedicated the child to God, ten thousand livres once paid, should release him from all

further pecuniary demands upon her account. This we thought was very reasonable; the notary was therefore sent for, and the agreement was hastily drawn up, and signed.

“ We then settled how you should be decoyed into our power; and you must remember how well we succeeded. In compliance with this gentleman’s wishes, we rather endeavoured to make you a Nun; but as you seemed obstinate, it was not our interest to drive you to extremities. I must acknowledge the letters you so often wrote me, led me to suppose we had been imposed upon; but our interest was too materially concerned, to allow me to pay the attention I ought to have done to your communications.”

“ But how often did you see the gentleman afterwards ?” interrupted her Ladyship; “ and how did you receive the annual sum he stood engaged to pay for our board ?”

“ We never saw him from the night he delivered you into our hands; nor do I believe he signed the articles that secured your pension”

pension to us, under his real name ; but he was always very punctual in his remittances, and we required no more. Had they ever failed, we should have threatened to set you at liberty ; and that must have had the desired effect. Your board has, therefore, been paid up to last Christmas, since which time we have been in daily expectation of either seeing or hearing from this gentleman : however as he left the discovery of your retreat to chance, he must take the consequence of his negligence, which prevented us from forcing you to accompany the Nuns to Douai."

"In what name is the deed you mentioned signed ?" asked Lord Irnham ; "and how were you to have let your rascally employer know, had either of your prisoners fell a martyr to your cruelty ?"

"The deed is in being, my Lord ; it is signed Charles Irnham ; and I used to write twice a year to A. B. at the ——— Coffee-house, Chancery-lane, London."

"I expect to have this deed put into my hands," said Lord Irnham, "and I shall be glad to see it."

my possession, Father," resumed his Lordship. "And now, as you hope to be permitted to die in peace, tell me what became of the other child, who you must know was in the chaise that brought my wife within your walls."

"Were my salvation at stake, I would not satisfy your Lordship. The child, a fine boy, remained one night under the care of our portress; and the next morning the gentleman set off with him for Cambrai. He told us that he did not mean to take him to England."

"All this tends to confirm our hopes," observed Colonel O'Hallaran, "as it corresponds with Lord Delmont's account of himself; he was between two and three years old when he was taken into Switzerland."

"I trust this deed will force my brother to be as honest as this wretched Friar," replied Lord Irnham; who then turning to the Father, said—"As soon as you have put me in possession of the deed, and every letter you received from Mr. Irnham, whose iniquitous

iniquitous schemes you certainly forwarded to the best of your abilities, I will suffer you to take some repose, and will give orders to have you taken proper care of, as I greatly wish to confront you with your still baser employer. Like all avaricious people, you have defeated your own purpose; for had you informed me where to have found my wife, I would have rewarded you far more amply than you have hitherto been for conniving at her imprisonment."

"If I can crawl back to where the soldiers found me, your Lordship shall be obeyed."

"I am afraid whatever treasures you have contrived to secrete, will have been removed by those who found you," replied his Lordship; "and surely the poor fellows never met with more lawful plunder."

"I am under no such apprehension, my Lord. I have certainly things of great value in my care, but they are buried under the floor, and there is no particular mark to

direct any one where to dig ; but I am ready to deliver them all up to your Lordship."

" I neither wish to deprive you of your own private property, nor of what has been entrusted to your care: but I will accompany you to your dungeon, and take charge of what you have concealed, to prevent its falling into other hands. Should you recover, it shall be restored to you as I receive it ; else I will distribute it among the ecclesiastics of your nation, who have taken refuge in England, to say masses for the repose of your soul. I am sure no sinner had ever greater need for their prayers."

The Friar bowed his head in token of acquiescence, and suffered his Lordship and the Colonel, attended by Martin, to support him to his late retreat, where he directed which stones were to be raised ; and in a short time Martin produced a tolerable sized tin box, that, the Friar said, contained every thing he had wished to conceal. They therefore returned to the room where they had left the

ladies; and the Monk having produced the key, Lord Irnham desired him to take out the papers, and then to relock the repository of his treasures, which his Lordship promised should be returned to him if he lived to reach England, where, as soon as he was able to travel, he meant to have him conveyed; he was therefore immediately put in possession of the apartment Lord Delmont had vacated, and a lay-sister appointed to watch over him. But for fear he should endeavour to rejoin the fugitive Nuns, a soldier was made answerable for his person; and the surgeon of one of the regiments belonging to the garrison, was sent for to see what could be done to save his life.

The happy party now renewed the conference that the appearance of the Friar had broke in upon, who had merely confirmed them in their former opinion, that bribery had rendered him and the Abbess subservient to Mr. Egerton's views. The night was already so far advanced, that they agreed to depart at day-

break, if a carriage could be procured for the ladies; and Lord Irnham had only to signify his wishes, before he was provided with a very handsome coach and four. Martin and the grooms were therefore sent forward with the saddle horses, and a few lines to Lord Delmont, to inform him that his two former nurses, who were anxious to resume their post, Lord Irnham, and the Colonel would breakfast with him.

During the night, the troops who had fought so bravely under their youthful Commander, returned to B——; and the General having repeated his thanks to them, and given every necessary order for the defence of the town, returned to the ladies; and for the first time since she could remember, Eliza passed the great gates she had hitherto considered as the boundary of her world, and was handed into the carriage in waiting.

The Friar was rather better, and his Lordship hoped he would be able to bear the journey

journey he wished him to take. Every object was new to the delighted Eliza, who gazed with rapture at the cottages, cattle, &c. that they passed.

"Do you think you should ever have been persuaded to take the veil?" asked her enraptured father.

"No never," she hastily replied. "I never could have borne the idea of confessing to Father Peter."

"Yet you had no idea of any other person of our sex?"

"I had seen Lady Irnham's picture of his Lordship; and the moment I saw Lord Delmont, I discovered the resemblance that struck her Ladyship so forcibly."

The Colonel smiled; and in a short time they reached the Castle where they had left Lord Delmont, who was up, and ready to receive his visitors. He had learned that his uncle was gone to B——, and presumed he had thought it most expedient to remove the ladies

ladies from the monastery, as he might have converted it into an hospital or a magazine, yet was rather astonished at his bringing them farther into France; but he was still more surprised when the ladies entered his apartment.

Lady Irnham hastily advanced towards him, saying—"Forgive my past capricious ingratitude, our brave and generous defender. We were sensible of our errors before we saw your uncle, and only hope you will make some allowances for me in particular, who owe all my misfortunes—— But I will not wound your feelings. How do you find yourself? I am fearful your courage made you too indifferent about your health."

"Can you forgive my past petulance, my dear Ma'am?" replied Lord Delmont. "Only remember (for I perfectly understand your insinuation) that the son is very anxious to repair what he was too young to prevent."

He next welcomed Eliza, whose sparkling

sparkling eyes evinced the joy she felt. No further explanations were entered into. Lord Irnham merely hinted to his nephew that he was perfectly acquainted with the mother; but till both her wrongs and claims could be made public, she wished to remain *incognita*, and under his protection. Lord Delmont sought to know no more; and that same day his uncle dispatched a most voluminous packet to Lord St. Osyth, in which were inclosed his letters for Lord Fitzarran.

Little of moment occurred in the ensuing week. The ladies provided themselves with as elegant cloaths as the neighbouring towns could afford them; and as the Army remained totally inactive during this period, Lord Irnham and the Colonel spent most of their time at the Castle: and as they could not be always upon their guard, Lord Delmont was sometimes surprised at the familiarity that appeared to reign between them and his late nurses; yet we must do him the justice to say, he formed no surmises derogatory

tory to the latter's honour: he only conceived there existed a mystery, with which it was not thought prudent to make him acquainted.

One evening, when they were all together, Lord Irnham carelessly asked his nephew if he had any recollection of his first travels upon the Continent; adding—"I should rather presume you were brought through this part of France when you were taken into Switzerland. Your Irish nurse did not accompany you upon that journey?"

"A gentleman left me at St. Sapphorin, my Lord," replied Delmont; "indeed Mr. Egerton has since told me that he was my travelling companion. Of our journey I can give no very satisfactory account, though I have a confused recollection of having been in a ship; and I rather fancy we travelled part of the way in a diligence, as I perfectly remember having been shook and beat for crying after the person I called my mother,

mother, whom, I therefore presume, we left somewhere upon the road."

With difficulty Lady Irnham concealed her emotion, as every word he had uttered, increased the hopes she had before formed. His Lordship, fearful she would betray the interest she took in what Delmont said, prudently changed the conversation, by reverting to some intended alterations he meant to make in the position of the forces under his command. He was explaining his motives to his nephew and the Colonel, when another of his Aid-de-Camps arrived at the Castle, who brought him information of one of the outposts having been attacked: the French had, however, been driven back with considerable loss. Sir Peter Reresby was the only person of any note that had been wounded in the skirmish, and he had expired before he could be removed.

"Poor young man!" ejaculated Lord Delmont; "though I scarcely know whether
such

such a death ought to be regretted. Still I pity his surviving relations."

Colonel O'Hallaran, in whose regiment he had formerly been, declared "it was fortunate his pride and impertinence had not brought him to an untimely end, before he had now died more honourably than he had lived; and that his sister would have no great reason to repine at *la fortune de la guerre*."

"Well, peace be to his *manes*!" cried Lord Innam. "But this intelligence confirms me in my former intention. The outposts shall all be called in, and the troops shall fall back upon B——. We are at present too much scattered, and are thus likely to afford the enemy a very great advantage."

The ladies had retired during this military debate; and early the next morning his Lordship and the Colonel returned to the camp, to make the former's intentions known to the Army.

CHAP.

CHAP XIX.

LORD IRNHAM had scarcely congratulated himself upon what he considered as a very judicious alteration in the situation of the British forces, when Lord St. Osyth's and the Earl's answers arrived. The former had lost no time in laying the statement he had received before the higher powers; and in consequence of his representations, as the Counsellor now had long and lucid intervals, and great hopes were entertained of his speedy recovery, Lord Irnham was permitted to resign the command he had accepted. The same favour was granted to Colonel O'Hallaran; and leave of absence, till the perfect recovery of his health, was at the same time

time forwarded to Lord Delmont, whom both Lord Fitzarran and Lord St. Osyth requested to return with his uncle, as the Counsellor gave every indication of returning reason; and certainly still had some secret upon his mind he might be led to divulge in his presence. Of his being Lord Irnham's son, Lord St. Osyth said he did not entertain a doubt; even though, like him, he agreed, except the Counsellor chose to acknowledge him as such, they certainly could not assert his claims, and might find it a matter of great difficulty to prove them.

Lord Fitzarran wrote much to the same purpose, acknowledging Lord Irnham's letter had destroyed what he considered as a very agreeable illusion; but as he should never cease to love Lord Delmont, let him belong to whom he might, so he trusted his Lordship's affection for him would suffer no diminution, admitting he proved at last to be only his nephew. Should, however, the Counsellor put the matter beyond a doubt,
and

and to the entire satisfaction of Lord and Lady Irnham, he hoped the former would have no objection to confirming the gift he had made his beloved Delmont of his Yorkshire estate, as it would grieve him very much to fear his favourite would be deprived of what he had so freely disposed of in his favour; and if, as he did not doubt, his Lordship would promise to oblige him in that point, he should sincerely rejoice could it be absolutely proved he was so much more distantly connected with the base Egerton;—and concluded, like Lord St. Osyth, by declaring his entire approbation of his Lordship's prudence, in not raising hopes that would, he knew, have rendered his dear Delmont so anxious, he would hardly have had a moment's peace till they were either realized or disappointed.

Nothing could have given Lord Irnham greater satisfaction than to find his conduct and intentions met the approbation of a man so materially concerned in the meditated attack upon his brother; he, therefore, though he meant

to set out in a week at farthest, immediately answered his letter, as he was particularly anxious to convince him he should ever consider Lord Delmont as his (Lord Fitzarran's) sole heir, let what would be the result of his application to the Counsellor; and concluded by assuring him, such was the respect he bore him, that it should rest wholly with his Lordship whether his brother's confession (admitting it confirmed the hopes he continued to entertain), should or should not be made public; as, thanks to the Earl, he was re-instated in all his rights from the moment he forced the Counsellor to acknowledge his legitimacy.

Having dispatched his epistle, he began to prepare for his departure. Lord Delmont rather imagined the permission he had received, and the wish the Earl and Lord St. Osyth expressed to see him in England, had some reference to the mystery respecting the ladies under his uncle's protection; he therefore readily agreed to accompany Colonel O'Hallaran, who wished to take some advance
upon

upon Lord and Lady Innham, and his daughter, that he might provide a house for their reception, as they were averse to taking up their abode in Park Lane during their present *incognita*.

His Lordship took a most affectionate leave of his nephew, observing he was fearful he must think him very reserved; but requested he would believe the seeming inconsistency of his behaviour arose solely from the regard he felt for him; and assured him every present mystery should be explained to his satisfaction when they met in England.

Lady Innham was, if possible, still more kind; and the gentle Eliza with difficulty suppressed a tear, while she hoped they should soon meet again.

To Colonel O'Hallaran, during their journey, Delmont did not scruple to acknowledge the impression this artless girl had made upon

upon his heart; requesting he would honestly tell him, not whether she was rich or of noble extraction, for he could dispense with both or either in the woman of his choice, but whether there would be any serious obstacles to their union; should he declare himself a candidate for her favours.

Had the Colonel been permitted to select a husband for his daughter, Lord Delmont would have been that man; it may therefore be supposed with what transport he listened to the avowal of so generous an attachment in her favour. He longed, yet dared not acknowledge their relationship; therefore checking the overflowings of his grateful heart, he only ventured to hint how much his Lordship's disinterestedness met his approbation; assuring him, that though not his equal in point of birth, Eliza was of a very good family, and he was convinced her friends would endeavour to make her fortune worthy his acceptance.

“A

"A thousand thanks, my dear Colonel," cried the enamoured Delmont. "You don't know what a weight you have removed from my heart. I will ask no more questions: I must only entreat you would make my wishes known to my Eliza's friends, and to my grandfather; because you can, I am persuaded, enter into details respecting the lovely creature that I am totally unacquainted with. But remember I commission you to assure the former their relation's hand is all I covet; her fortune you know I can dispense with, and her heart, I am vain enough to fancy, I possess."

"You do her justice," replied the Colonel; "and she is much too artless to conceal the love she bears you. Had either your uncle or myself rendered her the important service you did, we should probably have engaged her reverence and esteem, in addition to which you gained her affection; and I trust you will never have reason to regret you suffered her to deprive you of your heart. I will be answerable for your choice

meeting both your grandfather and uncle's approbation ; and as for myself — But I shall say too much ; only remember, to address you in your uncle's words—" my reserve arises from the regard I bear you."

Delmont smiled ; and, satisfied with having opened his heart to the Colonel, made no attempts to dive into those secrets he still wished to withhold from his knowledge.

As the passage was open between Ostend and Dover, they crossed to the latter, where, to the infinite joy of Delmont, he found Lord Fitzarran and Henry Melcombe ; the latter having come from Margate to give him the meeting, and his Lordship from London. Notwithstanding he still wore his left arm in a scarf, he was, in other respects, in pretty tolerable health ; and the Earl was rejoiced to see him look so well. Henry observed his complexion had acquired rather a deeper shade of brown, and he thought he was thinner than when they parted ; but as for his scarf, it was
a badge

a badge of honour, and rather becoming than not, particularly in the eyes of the fair. "*Apropos*," he continued, "do you know I am exceedingly angry with those French *sans culottes*, independent of their having engaged us in a war, and wounded you in their enthusiastic ardour to obtain what they do not know the meaning of, namely, liberty; for they have actually postponed, if not absolutely prevented me from becoming a Benedict."

"Pray explain this enigma," said Lord Delmont.

"Why, then to descend from the heroics, some three months ago I was, by chance, introduced to a most lovely girl of the name of Reresby, sister to a certain Baronet of that name you almost frightened into a fit at Newport. Well, I lost my heart to this divinity; made her a declaration that might serve for a model upon such occasions; won her affections, and finally followed her to Margate, to humour her vanity by appearing the proper

time in her suite, before I requested her to name the day ; when, just as I was meditating to bring matters to a conclusion by a dexterous *coup de main*, these very unpolite Frenchmen deprived her of her brother, and etiquette must deprive me of a wife for some time longer. Some people would console themselves for such a calamity by considering how much her fortune is increased by this *malheur* ; but as I really bore the poor silly fop no malice, and am seriously over head and ears in love, I have lamented his untimely death very sincerely ;—however, as soon as decency will permit us, we have sworn to meet at the altar ; and I am vain enough to flatter myself your Lordship will grace our nuptials with your presence."

" Undoubtedly, if I remain so long in England, which I much doubt ; however, if my best wishes will contribute to your felicity, they shall be at your service, though we are as far as the poles asunder."

" Would to Heaven I had gone into the Army!"

Army!" replied Henry; "I should have gloried in fighting by your side."

The friends then entered into a few general details, respecting what had occurred to each during their absence, while Colonel O'Hallaran was making his brother-in-law, whom he had called into another room for that purpose, participate in the heartfelt joy Lord Delmont's acknowledged preference of his daughter gave him.

The Earl's rapture was very little inferior to the fond father's; as, should he be deprived of his grandson, he observed, this match would make him his beloved Delmont's uncle. His Lordship had therefore seldom been in greater spirits than when he joined the young men at supper. After which, having drank success to the British arms in every quarter of the globe, he called upon Lord Delmont for his toast.

"I will give you the beautiful Nun, my Lord, I became acquainted with at B——."

“ Let us drink her in bumpers,” cried the Earl.

“ Half pint ones if his Lordship chuses,” rejoined Henry, who next gave Miss Reresby.

Colonel O'Hallaran was not the least gay of the party, nor did any of them think of retiring till their wax lights were rendered useless by the appearance of the dawn; and next morning they all proceeded to London, in Lord Fitzarran's post-coach, as Miss Reresby had left Margate upon receiving the news of her brother's death. They reached Delmont House long before the fashionable tea-hour; and Lord St. Osyth having been apprized of their landing at Dover, was upon the steps to welcome his son-in-law, whose household were all rejoiced to see him return, though rather disabled, still a much less sufferer than, all things considered, might have been expected.

CHAP. XX.

LORD and Lady Innham, and the beautiful Eliza, arrived in London during the ensuing week, and took up their abode in a ready-furnished house that the Colonel had engaged in one of the adjacent streets.

Lord Delmont had removed to Richmond for the benefit of the air; but generally drove to town during the day, and of course paid an early visit to his uncle and his female companions.

Colonel O'Hallaran had informed Lord and Lady Innham of his avowed predilection

in favour of his daughter, which it may be supposed met their entire approbation.

The Counsellor was as much recovered as Dr. M—— ever expected to see him. Delmont had been minute in his enquiries respecting his health; but fearful of bringing on a relapse, had forbore to visit him.

Lord Irnham was, however, too anxious to be relieved from his present state of suspense longer to postpone his intended visit—(Father Peter had travelled in their suite under the care of his valet). He therefore waited upon Dr. M——, who was of opinion the important conference ought not to be delayed. The Counsellor was now perfectly in his senses, but he could not be answerable for his not having a relapse.

The following morning was therefore appointed; Dr. M—— promising to meet his Lordship in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Lord Delmont, who had dined in town, was requested to accompany

accompany his uncle to his father's upon business of importance, between twelve and one the next day. He promised, as well as the Earl, to attend, presuming the business in question solely related to the ladies.

Lord Fitzarran agreed they were materially concerned in several points that Lord Irnham was very impatient to have cleared up; and the near relationship between him (Lord Delmont) and the Counsellor rendered his presence absolutely necessary.

At the time appointed, therefore, they proceeded into the Fields, and found in the drawing-room Lord and Lady Irnham, the Colonel, and his daughter. Father Peter was in the library; and in a few minutes Dr. M—— made his appearance, and informed them his patient was better than he could have dared to hope; but advised Lord Irnham to go alone into his dressing-room, as he was fearful too many visitors at once might agitate, and render him less competent to

answer any questions his Lordship might wish to ask him: but as it would probably be necessary to have witnesses of their discourse, Lords Fitzarran and Delmont might place themselves in the bed-room, the door of which should be open, and from whence they would be able to hear every thing that passed.

The Doctor's advice was of course followed; and Colonel O'Hallaran was left with the ladies.

"Your brother, Mr. Egerton," said Dr. M——, as he entered the dressing-room.

Lord Innham advanced;—he was too much agitated for a few seconds to address the wretched being before him, whose emaciated form, pallid looks, and melancholy dejection increased his emotion.

"Welcome to England, Innham!" he uttered in a low voice.

"How do you find yourself, Charles?"

said

said his Lordship, in an accent softened by innate humanity.

“Low-spirited and miserable, Irnham. This gentleman,” looking at the Doctor, “regulates all my actions. I hardly thank him for having restored me to a sense of my deplorable situation.”

“Come, come, do not let us revert to the past. You are surprisingly recovered; thanks, under Heaven, to your worthy physician.”

“You have been in England some time I understand.”

“Not very long. I have also been abroad with the Army.”

“Indeed! then I presume you have seen Lord Delmont; and he has told you——”

“Nothing, Charles; he would much rather conceal than blazon your failings to the world: but remember Heaven, in its infinite mercy, has restored you to your senses; evince, therefore, your gratitude for this unhopèd-for favour, by candidly acknowledging, not by endeavouring to palliate, the late errors in your conduct.”

" You are prejudiced against me I find, Irnham. Of what do my enemies, of what does Delmont accuse me ?"

" I have before answered your last question. To me Delmont has never mentioned your name ; but the world in general accuse you of having wickedly trifled with both him and Lord Fitzarran ; for no one believes, any more than myself, he is your son. Now I wish to receive a candid answer to this very plain question—Is he, or is he not your son ?"

" Surely I once put this matter beyond a doubt, Irnham ; or does my memory fail me ?"

" You swore, I have been informed, that Lord Delmont was the lawful heir to the Altamont and Fitzarran titles and estates, and I would venture to take a similar oath ; yet I am convinced he is not your son. Now do you begin to comprehend me ?"

" Not I truly. I am ready to repeat my former oath, if that will satisfy you ?"

" It would not ; and I expect, without any further

further evasions, a plain and direct answer to my question. Is Lord Delmont your son by Miss O'Brien?"

"I am not bound to answer every question you may judge it expedient to ask me, Lord Irnham. If you have any children, my sons can't interfere with their rights; but if you have any doubts respecting my relationship to Delmont, you had better endeavour to prove he is not my son; for I am no schoolboy, nor am I to be frightened into any acknowledgments it may suit your purpose I should make. Attack me in law, and I will defend myself; but don't meanly endeavour to take advantage of my disorder, to make me say and do just as you please."

"If you knew how completely you were in my power, Charles, I am of opinion you would not take such pains to convince me you are a villain of the blackest die. The town of B—— has been taken by storm by the British troops; among the prisoners were two English ladies, who had been confined for upwards of twenty years in the monastery of

St.

Sr. Clare. They are now in this house, and so is Father Peter, the Confessor, whom you bribed to second your iniquitous schemes. Here is the engagement you entered into with him and the Lady Abbess, and every letter you wrote them. What have you to say now in your own defence?"

"That all hell is leagued against me!" cried the furious Counsellor.

A look from Dr. M—— calmed his transports. That gentleman presented him with a glass of something he had been preparing, which the Counsellor drank in silence, and a violent shower of tears relieved his bursting heart.

"Are you inclined to see Lady Irnham and Miss O'Hallaran?" asked his Lordship; "and are you inclined to inform me what you did with my son, before the law forces you to give me satisfaction?"

"Heaven is just, Irnham—I feel it is. You and your's are triumphant, while I am rendered

rendered infamous by my crimes. Delmont is your son !”

The enraptured youth waited to hear no more ; but rushing into the room, was caught in his not less transported father’s embrace as he advanced.

“ My feelings convince me I have now found a father !” he exclaimed, raising his head. “ And was it my mother I rescued from the soldiers’ insolence ? Oh what reason she had to detest the son of Mr. Egerton !”

“ Accept my congratulations, my jewel of a boy ; and remember, if no longer your grandfather, I am the uncle of Eliza O’Hallaran,” cried the Irish Peér. “ But now pray, honest gentleman, what really became of my grandson ?”

“ He died, as you were informed, my Lord ; and lies in —— church-yard.

“ Well, we will leave you for a little while with your patient, Doctor. I am

anxious to present my son to his mother," hurrying into the drawing-room with Lord Delmont.

The scene that ensued may be better imagined than described. Delmont appeared to tread on air; and Lord Fitzarran declared the sooner he was united to his niece, the happier he should be, as he could not bear the idea of being no longer related to him.

Lord and Lady Irnham having given way to their mutual transports, and received the congratulations of the small party present, became anxious to bid the miserable Egerton a final adieu. They therefore, accompanied by the Earl and Delmont, returned into his dressing-room; but the moment they entered, he requested they would not increase his misery by their presence.

"We come to pronounce your pardon, Charles," said Lord Irnham. "It has pleased Heaven to afflict you with a dreadful malady;

malady ; God forbid we should wish to increase your sufferings ! Had you candidly confessed the truth during our last interview, I should not have been forced to treat you with a degree of harshness, considering your situation, very repugnant to my feelings. I now come to speak peace to your wounded spirit. Your treatment of Lady Irnham, and your repeated deceptions respecting our son, must be made public. A life of retirement will, therefore, henceforth, I should suppose, be your choice. Your unoffending children I will take under my protection ; and if you convince me you are a real penitent, you shall still find me a brother in every sense of the word."

Egerton silently extended his hand, which Lord Irnham warmly pressed ; and after a few moments thus began—

" You behold before you the victim of the abominable passion I inherited from my father. I therefore need not dwell upon my motives for confining your wife and her infant charge ;

charge; and every thing combined to facilitate my iniquitous scheme. Very contrary to my expectations, she survived her imprisonment. Had I dared, I should certainly have endeavoured to make away with her. She has doubtless told you how I managed my plan, and Father Peter must have confirmed her story. Your son I took into Switzerland, and placed, as a natural child of my own, at nurse there. You have heard his story, therefore I need not enlarge upon particulars. The Princess of Rosenwald paved the way for my destruction. I trusted the letter she shewed him, would have induced him to marry her; and I knew her to be so abandoned a character, I thought she would keep him abroad, and confined for her own sake.

“ I was guilty of no perjury when I took the oath required of me in Park Lane; but you will naturally wonder why I ever acknowledged Delmont was Lord Fitzarran's grandson; even that was less galling than to have declared who he really was, and this I must have done. I found, had I refused to satisfy
the

the Earl, of course I must then have also said where I had placed his mother, &c. This explanation will therefore, I think, account for what I know has hitherto appeared the most inconsistent part of my conduct. Lord Fitzarran took me by surprise, or I should probably not have so easily complied with his wishes; but I was entangled in my own iniquitous plans, and of two evils I chose the least, having told my father and all my friends your son was mine by Fanny O'Brien, whose name I had made him bear."

"Well, well," exclaimed Lord Fitzarran, "if my forgiveness will afford you a moment's satisfaction, you have it from the bottom of my soul; nor shall I love Lord Irnham's son less than I did my grandson. So let us hope you will make your peace with Heaven, since time is allowed you."

Lord and Lady Irnham spoke still more kindly to the same effect; and Delmont seemed even more anxious to reconcile

the miserable being to himself and the world.

The happy party now adjourned into Park Lane, from whence Lord Irnham dispatched an express to his father, and to his sister-in-law, to inform them of the recent discoveries which had taken place.

Lord Fitzarran was particularly anxious to convince his beloved Delmont he would be no loser in ceasing to be his grandson, and very eager to see him united to his niece.

Lord St. Ofyth and Henry Melcombe joined the family party in the evening, and participated in the general hilarity which prevailed in Park Lane.

The return, or rather resurrection of Lady Irnham and Miss O'Hallaran was soon made public; and it was whispered in the circles of fashion, that the latter would come out as Lady Delmont.

Delmont. Congratulations without end and number poured in upon both father and son.

Mrs. Egerton thought it most prudent to return to Lincoln's Inn Fields; and as she had long given up all hopes of seeing her eldest son a Peer, she was rather glad he no longer ran any risk of being dependant upon Lord Delmont.

The Earl of Altamont could not find expressions sufficiently strong to convey an idea of his transports to his son and grandson, whom he hoped to see at Castle Irnham as soon as possible; but at the expiration of a month, Lord Delmont was so perfectly recovered, he became anxious to join the army, and yet wished to receive the hand of the beautiful artless Eliza before he left England.

Lord Fitzarran declared he ought to be obliged. Neither Lord nor Lady Irnham had the slightest desire to retard their union :
and

and Colonel O'Hallaran agreed with his brother-in-law.

Six weeks, therefore, after his return to England, he led the elegant girl to the altar, and thus gratified every wish Lord Fitzarran declared he should ever form; when he recollected he still wished to see a son of his beloved Delmont's.

The ceremony was performed in Park Lane, and immediately afterwards the whole party set out for a beautiful villa Lord Irnham had taken in the environs of the metropolis.

Henry Melcombe was among the guests upon this occasion, as well as his bride elect, who having been introduced to Lady Irnham and Lady Delmont, soon became a great favourite with both.

The following morning, while they were at breakfast, Lord Fitzarran was presented with

with a letter, which he was informed had come express from the North.

“ From your steward at Delmont, O’Brien, I suppose,” said his Lordship, breaking the seal; “ though what he can have to say of sufficient importance to authorise his dispatching it express, I can’t foresee.”

A letter was enclosed within his own, the direction of which appeared to startle him. He read a few lines, then exclaimed—By Jafus though, I did not expect this ! Well, well, I am glad, however, the news did not come sooner. Don’t alarm yourselves, good folks ; an old acquaintance of mine has only verified some of my prognostics, for I have often said some farthing saving would occasion his death.”

“ The death of whom ?” demanded Lord Irnham.

“ Death did I say ? Well, faith ! I won’t retract my word. I never could hum and ha, and tell a melancholy tale like some people ;
yet

yet I possess some share of feeling, I flatter myself. But this letter is for you, Lord Irnham. I only trust you will remember that people who can be worse spared, are as liable to die as Lord Altamont."

"Gracious Heaven, my father no more! This is sudden indeed!" taking the letter.

"Yes, poor man! he is gone; and God rest his soul! I am very glad the news did not come yesterday, as it might have postponed the wedding; but for the life of me, I can't grieve for a man whose only idol was money; however, let his faults be forgotten, while we rejoice he has left so worthy a successor."

Lord Irnham looked as he felt, very much shocked. The Earl said no more. Lady Irnham ventured to ask if Lord Altamont had been long ill.

"He died in consequence of a fall, my love; but it is necessary I should set out immediately for the Castle."

"You will allow me then to accompany you,"

you," said Colonel O'Hallaran. "Our son will remain with the ladies!"

This kind offer was readily accepted; and while his Lordship was preparing for his journey, Lord Fitzarran sent for the groom, who had brought the melancholy intelligence, to enquire into the particulars of the accident which had rid the world of such an abominable miser as he termed the deceased Earl.

Lord Delmont had retired with his father and the ladies. Colonel O'Hallaran and Henry Melcombe only were therefore present while the lad delivered his plain, unvarnished tale.

"The weather being very fine, his Lordship had ordered all his servants into the hay-field; and on the day of his death, he chose to see we did our duty, as he termed it. The bailiff was upon the mow, which was getting very high, and gave orders, in the course of the afternoon, to have the ladder then in use taken to the carpenter's in the evening, to

have a round or two put in. His Lordship chanced to overhear what he said, and told him he might do such a trifling job as that, if it was absolutely necessary, himself, without troubling the carpenter. The bailiff said he wished to make it last the season, but it was become unsafe, now the mow grew so high; indeed it was hardly fit for any thing but fire-wood, and if he attempted to hammer it, he might only make bad worse; besides he thought his time better employed, as it would not cost more than twopence to have it done properly. This put his Lordship in a terrible passion, and he swore he would mend it himself—the ladder would last for years; so he immediately cut a green stick out of the hedge, and after fitting it in, mounted the ladder, to convince all of us it would bear our weight:—however, as he was swaying like upon the new round, owing to its being green, his feet flew from under him, and not having sufficient fast hold, he was not able to save himself; but falling to the ground,

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pitched upon his head, and never spoke afterwards."

"And never did any man more wantonly endanger his life," observed the Earl, dismissing the servant. He then declared he wished all such misers might meet with a similar misfortune, as nothing but the most consummate avarice could have induced him to act so absurdly.

Lord Irnham was very soon upon the road; and it may be supposed every funeral honour was paid the deceased Earl, whose personal property his Lordship made entirely over to his sisters.

In compliment to Lord Fitzarran, our hero continued to be styled Lord Delmont, and never had he reason to regret the secluded education of his Eliza; nor was his friend Melcombe less happy in his election of a partner for life.

Lord Irnham, now Earl of Altamont, soon

revived the ancient splendour attendant upon that name ; and, to crown his felicity, was blessed with a daughter and a grandson nearly at the same time.

Lord Fitzarran lived to see his beloved Delmont, whom he never quitted, surrounded with a numerous progeny ; and when he died, was universally regretted, though his successor and heir was as universally beloved.

Of the more inferior characters we have little to say. Mrs. Balfour, not finding the purity of her mind accord with the principles of the United Brethren, having buried Obadiah Makepeace, ended her career a Catholic.

Mr. Melcombe lived to a good old age ; and as he had been a respectable member of society while living, he was generally lamented when dead.

His son and Lord Delmont continue firm friends ;

friends; nor has a series of the most unbounded prosperity either hardened the heart or perverted the morals of our hero, who is conscious that divine, not human interposition preserved him from the machinations of his enemies.

H/a

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London Review, January, 1800.



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